

4255. cc. 23

G O D,
T H E
POOR MAN'S GUARDIAN,
A N D T H E
B A N K O F F A I T H;
O R,
A D I S P L A Y
O F T H E
PROVIDENCES of GOD,

Which have at sundry Periods of Time attended
the A U T H O R.

By WILLIAM HUNTINGTON,

Minister of the Gospel at Providence Chapel, &c. &c.

And A U T H O R of

The Spiritual Sea-Voyage—The Arminian Skeletons—The Naked Bow of God, and—The Poor Christian's Last Will and Testament.

And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

Luke xxii. 35.

L O N D O N :

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TO THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES
OF
C H R I S T,
AT
PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, in LONDON,
AND AT
RICHMOND and WOOKING, in SURRY.

Dearbly beloved in the Lord Jesus, and longed for in the bowels of Christ—whom I love in the faith, and to whom the love of Christ hath constrained me to become a debtor—grace, mercy and peace be multiplied, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I CHOSE to dedicate this little treatise to you, because sometimes those providences which appear rather out of the common line, are hard nuts for a staggering faith to crack: some of you have known me from the beginning, and have been eye-witnesses of most of the facts which I am going to treat of—and if you will allow me to make an ho-

nest confession, my conscience has often lashed me for not keeping a diary, or rather minuting down the many conspicuous providences of God, which have appeared to me in times of trouble : but I, like an ungrateful rebel, refused to obey the dictates of my own conscience, as well as the precepts of God's word ; and now I have nothing to trust to on this occasion but my own treacherous memory ; unless the Lord is pleased to send the Comforter to me ; and if he comes, *he will bring all things to remembrance, whatever God hath said unto me*, as the God of providence.

I am sure the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, the world and all that is therein ; all the cattle of the forest are his, and so are the flocks of a thousand hills—yea, the corn, and the wine, the oil, the wool, and the flax ; yea, and even the wicked deceiver, as well as the deceived, are the Lord's ; and it is he that maketh one man poor, and another rich ; that bringeth down and lifteth up ; and no man can add to this fixed stature of God—whether the stature be in grace or in providence.

The battle (saith the wise man) is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift, nor bread to men of skill : the weak are often seen to win the field, and the cripple to win the heavenly race ; and even fools to accumulate the greatest fortunes. There is no adding a cubit to this stature, even in the least circumstance—then why take we thought for the rest ?

I be.

D E D I C A T I O N.

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I believe God never intended me to be a preacher to the rich, because he has ever kept me dependent on his providence; and if I had been rich, I might have been tempted to trust in uncertain riches; and I know well, that *where the treasure is, there will the heart be also*. It must be a hard task to preach against covetousness, while the heart is a trading at the stocks. I fear this is the case with some who are called ministers; but sin always brings its own punishment along with it; such can have no communion with God, nor peace of conscience; for it is sin that separateth between God and the soul.

Nor have I any room to believe that God ever intended me for a preacher to *please pharisees*, because he has for many years given me an humbling sight, and a deep sense, of my own wretched depravity; so that I dare not place any confidence in the flesh, nor even in the fruits of faith—knowing that a man can merit nothing, allowing that he were able to keep the whole law perfectly—*When ye have done all these things say, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done no more than was our duty to do."*—But I come infinitely short of doing all; therefore can never boast of doing a part. I know that pharisees are very fond of a dry form of religion; but although God permitted me to use those forms for many years, yet he never regarded them, nor removed the guilt of my sin, in answer to them: therefore, to

use an English proverb, *I shall never speak well of that bridge, because it never bore me safe over the stream.*

I know that God tells us *to turn away from those who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof—* and dry forms of devotion, used by people who deny the grace and Spirit of God, is no better than a stage for antichrist, a varnish for sepulchres (a), an apparel for harlots (b), a winding-sheet for pharisees (c), a bribe of dead works put into the hands of an honest conscience (d), a trading stock for blind guides (e), a dish of husks to stifle conviction (f), a mungrel service offered to God and mammon (g), the mimicry of hypocrites (h), a starting hole to shun the cross (i), and the fool's last refuge.

God permitted me for many years to try what the form of devotion would do for me; but like the poor woman in the gospel, *I got worse instead of better*: therefore I was obliged to lay it by, and let *the words of my mouth be the meditation of my heart*. In this way the Holy Ghost helped my infirmities; therefore I *must* preach up spiritual prayer;—and as Christ answered the Spirit's call, I *must* preach up Jesus as the eternal God, that hears and answers prayer. This is a part of the ministry which I have received of

(a) Matt. xxiii. 27.

(c) Isa. xxx. 1.

(e) Isa. lvi. 11.

(g) Matt. vi. 24.

(i) Isa. xlii. 22.

(b) Isa. iv. 1.

(d) Heb. ix. 14.

(f) Luke xv. 16.

(h) Matt. xv. 8.

D E D I C A T I O N .

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the Lord, and I hope through grace to take heed to it, and fulfil it.

I believe God intended that I should preach *faith*, because he has kept me dependent by faith on himself both for spiritual and temporal supplies; and I am persuaded that he intended me for a minister to the ignorant and to the poor;—to the ignorant, because he sent me to preach, and gave me many seals to my ministry, before I could read a chapter in the bible with propriety;—to the poor, because he sent me without a penny in my pocket—therefore as a minister of the poor I hope to magnify mine office.

The vanity of worldly wisdom—the excellency of divine knowledge—the uncertainty of worldly riches—the preciousness of faith's wealth—the blessed religion of Jesus, and the insufficiency of human inventions—all these seem to be *some* of the things belonging to the gospel which is committed to my trust: and I know that it becomes a *steward* to be found faithful, and not to waste his master's goods.

What further convinces me of my being appointed by God for a preacher to the poor is this, that the many seals of my ministry consist chiefly of the poor, both in town and country; so that I can adopt with propriety the language of the apostle, and say, *You see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things*

of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence (a).

Although my ministry is chiefly among the poor, yet it is a copy the Saviour has set, and it is very much like his own: for no man can prove Jesus a rich man after the flesh, nor a scholar after the flesh, nor a doctor after the flesh, nor a bishop after the flesh. And as for the followers of his personal ministry, they were poor; for *unto the poor the gospel was preached*—and those who received the glad tidings were *babes in knowledge*—*I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.* Let us then take all the encouragement which God has given us, to be *contented in our respective stations*, even though it be in *servitude*; for Jesus was *among men as he that serveth*.—As Christ himself then is entirely of our side of the question—let us evermore rejoice in this glorious pattern.

One reason for my writing this treatise is, because we are often tempted to believe that God takes no notice of our temporal concerns.—As the thoughts of the salvation of our souls ly near our hearts, and as that is of the greatest importance, we think God will not forget that: but as for our private concerns

(a) 1 Cor. xxvi. 27, 28.

in life, we suppose that they are beneath his notice and inspection.—This latter is a temptation from the devil, and such I hope I shall make it appear in the following treatise.

Another reason why I have wrote this book is, that the word of God abounds with many similar circumstances of the divine providence of God; such as, changing the colour of *Jacob's flocks and herds*—the Lord making *Abraham rich in cattle*—feeding the prophet by a raven—multiplying the widow's oil and meal—sending the apostles out without purse or scrip—feeding Israel in the wilderness with manna—and cutting off by death that rich glutton *Nabal*, in order to relieve poor hungry David.—All these are striking instances of God's tender regard for the poor of his flock.

I shall only treat of what hath occurred in the course of my own experience, of which things many of you are living witnesses; and may God bless the work for the encouragement of his childrens' faith, patience, and watchfulness. And to this end, I shall descend to the most minute circumstances, in order to shew the narrow inspection of God into the affairs of those who put their trust in him.

I am aware of the reproach that will be cast upon such a work, as also upon the author: but this doth in no wise concern me; I only wish that I were as free from every sin, as I am from the carnal fear of man; I believe I should then shortly preach up *sinless perfection*. If we preachers get proud, worldly, and lifeless, we generally get into disesteem

with

with the most lively Christians; and if the presence of God doth not keep up our reputation among those righteous ones, we generally begin to undermine the reputation of others who cleave closer to God than ourselves, and endeavour to establish a character upon the ruins of other men's reputation; and while we are carrying on this business, God sets others to undermine our's—as *you mete, so shall it be measured to you again*.—This is God's BALANCE;—and the wise man's appeal to conscience is, *Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken, lest thou hear thy servants curse thee: for oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others* (a).

The first little treatise which I wrote was condemned by many, who at the same time never understood it; but God blessed it to several souls, to their happy deliverance;—and if God sets *his seal* to it, we have no cause to look for the approbation of any other. When the *Skeletons* first appeared, the complaint was, that it was wrote in a bad spirit; that the divinity was *tolerable*, but the spirit was *bad*.—Sound divinity and zeal for God, flowing from a *bad spirit*, is like the old contradiction which we read of—*How can Satan cast out Satan?* However, although there were many who condemned it in private, yet I rejoice; because several of them plundered the very bowels of it to preach in public. I should like to see a treatise upon the operations of the Holy Ghost, wrote by some of those who are *infallible*;

(a) Eccl. vii. 22.

and then I should know, according to their views, how far that blessed Spirit ought to go in his operations, and where he ought to stop, according to *their decree*. I believe if Elijah was on earth, he would be loaded with as many reproaches of uncharitableness as I have been: but why should I wonder at this, when Christ himself was accused by the doctors of old, of preaching and working under the influence of a *bad spirit*: *They said, that he cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils*. I would caution these infallible gentlemen, however, not to be too hasty in ascribing a work which God owns and blesses, to the dictates of an evil spirit; *lest haply they be found even to fight against God the Holy Ghost*: I much question if they are very well acquainted with that blessed Spirit's tuition; for if they were, they would not talk at that rate. Natural affections are often mistaken for the operations of the Spirit of God: but Christ sharply rebuked Peter for favouring the things of men, more than the things of God; and I know that all the affections of nature are contra-distinguished from the influences, or fruits, of the Spirit, by one who is an *infallible judge*. *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit*. Marvel not that I said unto thee, *Thou must be born again*. The new man must come forth, and the old man must be crucified throughout.

I own that natural affections are some of the best rags of fallen nature; but as they are natural, they must not be mistaken for, nor coupled with the Holy Ghost.

Ghost. All mortality shall be swallowed up of life, when he who ONLY hath immortality shall appear: therefore make not that your celestial covering, which is to be no more than your grave cloaths; all these cloths and napkins must be wrapt together by themselves, when Christ mystical shall awake and sing: for we hope to be delivered from the whole body of sin and death; because it is under this we groan, being burdened. Some, indeed, have no brighter views of heaven than Mahomet in his koran; I speak this to their shame—for some professors are ready to repeat the old inquiry, How are the dead raised up? and with what crop of natural affections do they come? To whom I answer, the old, or the natural grain must entirely die, that the new and spiritual harvest may take place.—The seed which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain.

However, God hath blessed THE SKELETONS to many souls, and that satisfies me.—As for some men approving or disapproving of that work, it matters not; for I find by history that the book of the Revelation, wrote by John the Divine, though it contains a certain and full prediction of all future events both in churches and states, and a concise recapitulation of all past occurrences, was refused almost universally by infallible prelates in the primitive churches of Christ, (though Christ sent his angel to testify it to them) being wise above what was written, though perhaps too ignorant to understand the writing; therefore it was kept out of the church as uncanonical.

nical. The Epistle of *Saint Jude* too, appearing such a foe to *universal charity*, as well as to spots in their feasts of *charity*, and other counterfeit *errors*, and being expressive of so much zeal and warmth for God's glory, was kept out of the church for many years; and the excuse was as weighty as some in our days make against mine—it was wrote in a *bad spirit*; and that he had quoted an unscriptural expression also, namely, that of *the devil contending for the body of Moses*; which in my opinion seems scriptural enough to any discerning Christian; for if the *body of Moses* is *the offspring of Hagar*, and figuratively the children of Jerusalem, which are in bondage; and *Jerusalem the desolate*, without God, and *without an husband*, and her children without a father, *these children are bond children under the law*, and being *under the law*, are consequently *under the curse*. No wonder then if the *officer*, the devil, accuseth them to justice, and contends for this mystical *body of Moses*, when Moses himself *accuses them even before God*. I hope these divines will shew me some lenity, although I may be of a bad spirit—because I have not gone quite so far in the trial of *Universal Charity* as to execute him—neither have I cut Agag in pieces, nor slain any of the prophets of Baal, as some have done, who were under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But although I had, it would have been no crime, seeing God himself is a *swift witness against sorcerers*.

My first pamphlet being condemned as nonsense, and the second as the product of a bad spirit, so this
will

will possibly be condemned as favouring too much of *self*—more especially as I treat only of the kind providences which have occurred in the course of my own experience. However, I hope to rest satisfied till the great day arrives, when God will make manifest the secrets of the heart, and shew whom he approves, and whom not; and then it will be seen, that neither *universal charity*, nor *natural affections*, shall be found among all the redeemed of God; for it is not said that natural affections shall be *all*, but that *God shall be all in all*.

As for the kind advice which some of you have given me, I thank you for it, and can bear with your weakness; knowing that *I spake as a child, thought as a child, and understood as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things*. I have no notion of getting a renowned preacher to preface any of my poor scribbling: it appears, in my opinion, too much like the *Satanic art* of *puffing at an auction*.—The fewer of human inventions the better in divine things; besides, I believe that many precious ministers of Jesus have in their young days put prefaces to commentators and other works, just to please a bookseller, who, when possessed of a riper judgment, were ashamed of the doctrines which they had formerly recommended to others:—yea, some who I hear have condemned my book, have wrote prefaces to works now in my possession, out of which I defy all the masters of arts in Christendom to distill one *thimble-full* of evangelical divinity, exclusive of the HOLY

NAME

NAME OF GOD.—Upon this principle I do not desire any good man to expose his judgment to contempt, by puffing off my abilities, as I have not a single doubt but kind Providence will defray my expences at the press, as long as God intends that I should write any thing for him; and when this cruse of oil fails, you will hear no more of me from the printer. Beside, if I was inclined to beg or cringe for a preface, I have no such tip-top ministers to go to; for I find by blessed experience, that I can creep into the very *bosom* of my dear Redeemer with more ease than I can touch the robes of a dignified clergyman. I have sometimes indeed been admitted into the pulpits of some of these great men; but if the power of God has been present to heal, and the people have been happy under me, I have been admitted there no more.

I am informed that it is common among horse-jockies to cry a horse down, if his heels are too light: this custom may well become the turf, but it ill becomes the pulpit. However, God has given me a pulpit of my own, so I have no cause to borrow; and this fulfils an antient promise once applied to my soul with power, even from God himself—*thou shalt lend to many, but borrow of none.*

I chuse that my doctrine and reputation should stand and fall together—It shall never be the coal-heaver and Co.—All that I preach or write that is divine, God himself taught me; for I never learned it of man, nor did I bring any of it into the world
with

with me : therefore it is not my own, except the errors ; for I have nothing, nor am nothing by nature but sin.—Of course, I think it my duty to be faithful in delivering what I have received to the benefit of others ; and to be laborious, watchful, and faithful over those whom God hath committed to my care.

How large this work will swell, I know not ; but I am determined to write all the circumstances of God's providence, which he shall be pleased to bring to my mind—and let his kind providence shine to his own honour, and to the comfort of his poor flock, who are obliged to trust in him, or starve.—O blessed object, worthy of all trust !

I doubt, reader, we shall give a second offence for chatting so long together by way of preface ; cavillers will be ready to say, that *we are like children in the market-place, calling to their fellows* ; therefore we had better part than give any offence to them.

Good morning to you, Mr. Parson ; God bless you.

I thank thee, Christian ;—but I beseech thee not to put any titles or compliments upon me ; give them to those who can make a meal of them ;—but coal-heaving is hard work, and coal-heavers require better food than compliments.

Reader, fare thee well.

Thine to serve in the bowels of Christ,

W. H.

G O D,
T H E
POOR MAN'S GUARDIAN,
A N D T H E
B A N K O F F A I T H.

W H E N I was about seven years of age, I heard a person say, that "God took notice of children's sins." The wonderful workings of my mind upon these words, I shall not at present descant on; neither shall I mention the many trials I underwent at the bar of my own conscience while the impression dwelt on my mind.—I also remember to have once heard a person say, "that all things were possible with God;" which words I secretly treasured up and pondered in my heart; and as I had a great desire at that time to live in the capacity of an errand-boy, with a certain gentleman in the

B place,

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place, being very poorly brought up, and knowing much the want of the common necessaries of life ; it came to my mind, that if " all things were possible " with God," it was also *possible* for him to send me to live as a servant-boy with 'Squire C—ke ; though at the same time he had a boy who I believed was well approved of. Notwithstanding this last circumstance, I privately asked God, in an extempore way, to give me that boy's place ; and made many promises how good I would be, if he granted me this request ; and for many days I privately begged of God this favour, which nobody knew but God and myself, till now I relate it. I believe I went on in this way of praying, sometimes under a hedge, or on my bed, for a week or two ; and I thought if God granted me this favour, I should know whether all things were possible with him, or not. Having prayed for many days, and finding no likelihood of an answer, I readily concluded that there was no God ; and therefore I had no cause to be so afraid of sinning, nor had I any occasion to pray to him any more. Accordingly I left off praying for some time, and then began again, till at last I left off entirely. Some few days after this, there came a man to my father's house, and said, " William, 'Squire C—ke wants a " boy : why don't you go after the place ? " I answered, " John D—— lives there." He answered, " No ; " he is turned away." I asked for what ? He replied, " Old Master Coly, the oyster-man, went there
" a few

“ a few days ago, to carry some oysters, and while
 “ the old man was gone with a measure of them into
 “ the house, the boy robbed the pads, as they hung
 “ on the horse, which was tied up at the gate, and
 “ the mistress saw him, and discharged him for it.”

The compunction which I felt—the thoughts that I had—the various workings of my mind—the promises I made, and the petitions I put up as I went after the place, I chuse to conceal ; for I think they would hardly be credited, considering I was no more at this time than eight years old. However, I got the place, to my astonishment, and the bargain was struck at twenty shillings *per annum* ; and for many days and weeks an uncommon impression about the power of God lay fresh on my mind. But soon after this, an uncommon temptation brought me to believe that there was no God, and if there was, he took no notice of such creatures as we are, or of any of our affairs.—I deemed it a chance that I got the place, so I imagined that I had no occasion to pray, or to pay the vows which I had made.—This temptation made a sufficient breach for me to creep out at, and proved an awful inlet to vice and vanity, which I for some months accordingly gave a loose to : but soon after, I offended my master, was discharged from my servitude, and went home as deeply stung with guilt for my folly, as I had been before lifted up at the sight of God’s mercy.

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After this period, I had sharp work in my conscience for some years, at certain times, but was still pursued with deistical principles—that God took no notice of our proceedings;—till at last it appeared rather fixed in my mind, and insensibility and stupor naturally followed. Now it was that I got wholly out of all fear of God, or thoughts of futurity, and very soon learned to dance, which is just as serviceable a net as devils could invent, or frail mortals drop into. However, God put a stop to this, by laying a fit of sickness on my tabernacle, which I had never been afflicted with before. I laboured hard, rather than submit to go to the bed, and made a shift to keep about my business as long as I was able to move a limb: but at last I was forced to yield. Then my conscience began to do its office, and the wrath of God to alarm me, so that I was fully convinced God took notice of my conduct in this life, and would reckon with me for it in the next. I lay in this state of mind, until I had an earnest of damnation in my heart; and I had not a single doubt of my portion in everlasting burnings, if I died in that state.—God brought me so nigh the end of all flesh, that the rattles of death stopped my breath twice.—I tried to fly from death, and got out of the bed to run away, but could not; for I fell on the floor, and there I lay till my fellow-servants found me, and put me into bed again by force. And soon after I heard one of the maids say, “Poor William will
“die;”

“die;” “Yea,” said the other, “Doctor Wilfon
 “has given him over:”—they knew not that I heard
 them. I tried again to fly from death, but I found
 I could not. So I began to whisper a prayer to
 God, which conscience would not allow me to do
 before. And as I began to pray, I gathered strength,
 and in less than a month I was out of doors. I quit-
 ted my servitude, went home to my parents to ga-
 ther strength, and never danced any more, from that
 hour to this. Soon after I got well, I was informed
 one ‘Squire P——], of Charren in Kent, wanted a
 servant. I went after the place, and took courage
 to ask of God the favour of success, as he had been
 pleased to punish me for my past folly, and brought
 me to believe that I had highly offended him. I
 went under a hedge, and put up a solemn prayer to
 him, to give me success in my journey, and make me
 an object of his care for the future: and I cut a stick
 half through, and bent it down in the hedge, which
 I promised to look at, at my return, and render
 praise to God, if he granted me this favour.—Some-
 what like poor *Jacob, in his trouble, when he anointed
 the pillar, by pouring a little oil upon the top of it; and
 promising, if God would keep him, then he should be his
 God; and of all that God should give him, he would give
 God the tenth part.* And God heard my prayer, and
 I got the place.—Though there was a servant in the
 parlour with the gentleman, and though they had
 partly agreed just as I came; yet he broke off the

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bargain with him, to my astonishment. And at my return, I looked at the stick which I had marked, with many tears, and offered up an imperfect tribute of praise to the God of my daily mercies, whom I had neglected, and much offended.

For some time I endeavoured while in place to walk so as to please God, as I imagined; but alas! the vanities of this world are too strong for any but those *who are kept by the mighty power of God, through faith unto salvation*; which power I knew nothing of; therefore my resolutions were soon broken, and I forgot my God.—But soon after this, he again laid his afflicting hand on me, and laid me on a sick bed for many months, nor did I recover effectually for three years after. But still distress of mind, at times, followed me; and, blessed be God, he did not wholly leave me without some convictions, till he brought me to know the *truth as it is in Jesus*. One particular instance of Providence, I remember here also, which was, I had ordered my box of cloaths to be left at the Star inn, at Maidstone, in Kent, for the Cranbrook carrier to bring to me, but he said it was not there. So I went in search after it, fearing it was lost; and at this time I was so poor in pocket, that I had but one shilling left in all the world. However, I thought I should be able to go out and home again in one day; therefore that shilling would bear my charges: but when I came to Maidstone, the box was not there: I was obliged to go farther, and,

and, in my return, I found myself so very weak and slow, that I could not get back that day:—the shilling was gone, my strength was gone also, and the weather was very wet and cold; night, too, began to draw on apace, and I at this time was two miles from Maidstone, which was fourteen from Cranbrook. While I was thinking of, and mourning over my miserable situation, I thought if I were one that feared and loved God, as others in old time had done, I might have any thing at his hands: but as for me, I had made him my enemy by sin, and therefore he would take no notice of me, nor of any body else in our days; for parsons and people were all wicked alike. Presently after this, it came suddenly on my mind, to go out of the foot-path, which led through the fields, and go into the horse-road, though, at the same time, the foot-path was by far the best road. I had not been in this road scarcely a minute, before I cast my eye on the ground, and there lay a sixpence. I took it up, and before I had walked many steps farther, there lay a shilling also. I took it up, and it supplied my necessities at that time very well. These manifold providences and answers to prayer, did, at times, deeply impress my mind, that God had some regard for me:—but when sin was committed, all these thoughts were blasted.

However, I never could intirely, after this time, get rid of all my thoughts about the awful day of

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judgment, the dreadful consideration of an *endless eternity*, the tremendous *tribunal of God*, the woeful state of a *guilty sinner before him*, the certain conquest of triumphant death, and the certain approach to God's bar;—the wretched figure that a guilty soul would make, when all his secret and open sins were exposed to God, angels, and men, and the miserable punishment which souls must feel, who have their doom fixed in the gloomy receptacle of the damned.—These things were, at times, uppermost in my thoughts; and though I pursued many pleasures, in order to stifle them, yet I had felt enough to fix a lasting conviction on my soul of the truth of them.

Having *wandered* about for some years in this *solitary way*, of *seeking rest and finding none*, it happened that I once went to work at *Darnbury Park*, in *Essex*, for one 'Squire F——b. I had not been there but a few days before I fell sick, and was carried to the sign of the *Bell*, where no body knew me, and with only *two shillings* in my *pocket*: but Providence sent an old widow, whose name was *Shepherd*, and whose deceased husband had been a *butcher by trade*. This woman was much of a *doctorefs*—she *doctored me*, *nursed me*, *watched with me*, and *fed me*, though she never saw me before, nor since; nor had she any thing for her trouble, and yet took as much care of me as if I had been her own child. And about two years ago I was determined to go down and see her, and restore her fourfold for her labour, and tell her
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what God had done for me; but, upon enquiry, I found that she had been dead about three months, which I was very sorry for.

I do not remember any other particular providence until I married, and my wife and I had taken ready-furnished lodgings at Mortlake, in Surry, where God smote my conscience effectually. It so happened that I fell lame, having received a wrench in my loins, which rendered me incapable of labour for many days: during this time our money was all gone, and we were but strangers in the place, having not been in it above half a year, or a little more. After I began to recover a little, there fell a deep snow on the ground, which prevented my working for many days. Here Providence suffered us to know what it was to want. At this time we had one child, about five or six months old, which was our first-born; and it happened *one morning* early, that my wife asked me for the *tinder-box*, seemingly in a great fright, and crying out, "I wonder the poor child has not waked all night." She lighted the candle and took up the child, but it was as *dead* as a *stone*, and as *black* as a *coal*—it went off in a convulsion fit, as three more have done since, all of whom also turned black. Here Providence appeared again; for about three or four months before this death happened, a gentleman, in whose garden I at times had wrought, desired me to look after his horse in the country, while he was in town, and I was to have so much

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much *per* week for it. On the very day which the child died, the gentleman came down from London; so I got my money for looking after the horse, and that just buried the poor infant. Thus, my lameness, my poverty, my distress of mind, the suffering of my wife, the loss of my child, and the sense of God's wrath, were the most complicated distress I had ever felt.—From this time spiritual convictions began to plough so deep in my heart, as to make way for the word of eternal life, which at length brought me experimentally to know *the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent*. And if God should spare my life, and give me time, I may acquaint you of the whole work of God on my soul, in a treatise by itself: but in this I intend treating chiefly of the providence of God, lest the book swell too big for the poor to purchase.

I do not remember any particular providence attending me, till about three or four years after, at which time I was brought savingly to believe in Jesus Christ for life and salvation. At this time I dwelt in a ready-furnished lodging at Sunbury, in Middlesex, where my eldest daughter, now living, fell sick, at about five or six months old, and was wasted to a skeleton. We had a doctor to attend her, but she got worse and worse. Having lost our first child, this was a dear idol to us—and I suppose it lay as near my heart, as poor Isaac did to the heart of Abraham. However, it appeared as if God was determined

determined to bereave us of her, for he brought her even to death's door—and my wife and I have sat up with her night after night, watching the cradle, expecting every breath to be her last, for two or three weeks together. At last I asked the doctor if he thought there was any hope of her life, and he answered, no; he would not flatter me, she would surely die. This distressed me beyond measure; and as the doctor had told me he could do no more for her, I left my lodging-room, and went to my garden in the evening, and in my little *tool-house* I wrestled hard with God in prayer for the life of the child; but upon these conditions, that if my request were granted, and that she should live to arrive at the full stature in life, and in future times turn wicked, and be damned for sin, and that my earnest prayer should be the cause of it, I beseeched God not to regard my petition for the child, though she was as dear to me as my own life. I went home satisfied that God had heard me, and in three days the child was as she is now, and ate as heartily, only her flesh was not restored as before: and this effectually convinced me that *all things were possible with God*.

I had now dwelt about fourteen months at Sunbury, and had served a gentleman in the capacity of a gardener, at twelve shillings *per week*. The gentleman informed me, he proposed to keep his carriage, and intended his driver should work in the garden; therefore he should only hire a man now
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and then a day, but should not keep a gardener constantly. I was, therefore, discharged from my work, but had the liberty offered me of staying till I could get employment elsewhere. I believe my master could often see the felicity of my mind, and likewise the wisdom God had given me, by the answers I was able to give to his various questions.—Grace carrieth many rays of majesty with it, though it take up its abode in a beggar. However, I thought this world was his God, therefore I refused his offer, as Abraham did the present which was offered him by the King of Sodom—that is, I would take nothing that was his, *from a thread even to a shoe latchet.*

After I had been three weeks out of employment, I heard of a place at Ewell, in Surry, which I went after, and engaged in; it was with a gentleman that manufactured gunpowder. I agreed for eleven shillings *per* week in the summer, and ten shillings in the winter; and I procured a ready-furnished room in an old thatched house on Ewell Marsh, (if with propriety it might be called a furnished room) at two shillings *per* week. I was obliged to pawn all my best cloaths, in order to defray the remaining expences which attended my wife's lying-in, owing to my being out of employment, and to hire a cart to carry my personal effects (which were but small) to Ewell; and when the cart set us down on Ewell Marsh, on the Monday morning, and I had paid the hire of it, I had the total sum of tenpence halfpenny left,

left, to provide for myself, my wife, and child, till the ensuing Saturday night. But though I were thus poor, yet I knew God had made me *rich in faith*, and these words came on my mind with power, *he multiplied the loaves and fishes to feed five thousand men, besides women and children*. We went on our knees, and turned that parable into a prayer, and beseeched the Almighty to multiply what we had, or to send relief another way, as his infinite wisdom thought most proper. The next evening my landlord's daughter and son-in-law came up to see their mother, with whom I lodged, and brought some baked meat, which they had just taken out of their oven, and it was brought for me and my wife to sup along with them. These poor people knew nothing of us, nor of our God. The next day evening they did the same, and kept sending victuals or garden-stuff to us, all the week long. We had not made our case known to any but God; nor did we appear ragged, or like people in want; no, we appeared better in dress than even those who relieved us: but God sent an answer to our prayer by them, who knew not at the same time what they were about, nor did I tell them till some months after. While we were at supper I entertained them with spiritual conversation. After supper I went to prayer with them, and prayed most earnestly for them, and God answered it; for he sent the woman home deeply convicted that night; nor did her convictions abate, till she was brought to see Christ crucified in
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the open vision of gospel faith, and receive peace and pardon from Christ for herself. Some time after this, God began to work upon the husband also, and then I related the fore-cited circumstance; at the hearing of which he told me how it was impressed on his mind that I was in want of victuals, and his wife found fault with him for thinking so, and bringing of it to me, saying, "the people are better to pass than we are;" but he contradicted her, and insisted on her doing what he desired.

It pleased God sorely to afflict this poor man some few years after, during which time I was enabled to restore him fourfold. He left a testimony for God with his dying breath, and I believe he is in eternal glory. His widow is this day a servant to one Mr. Linsey, a tallow-chandler, in Lambeth-Marsh, on the right hand side of the road, which leads from Westminster bridge to Clapham.—Her name is Ann Webb.

I found that the small pittance of eleven shillings per week (as I paid two shillings for a ready-furnished lodging) would amount very slowly toward the getting my cloaths out of pawn, which, with the interest, would amount to nigh forty shillings, and which I was loth to loose. It came in my mind to look into my Bible, to see if any instruction for faith could be got about this matter. I turned promiscuously to these words, *There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two fishes, but what are they among so many?* I asked my wife if she ever ate barley: she said,

said, Yes, in *Dorsetshire*. I told her I never did eat it, but the poor Saviour and his apostles ate it, and I supposed it was because they (speaking after the manner of men) could get no better food; and as God saw it necessary to keep us in a state of deep poverty, it ill became us to complain, or refuse the meanest diet, seeing he had blessed us with an assured hope of heaven hereafter. She replied she was willing, if I was: so she went to a farmer to ask him to sell her half a bushel of barley; his reply was, he sold his barley by the quarter, or load, to maltsters, for making malt, and should not trouble himself with measuring such a small quantity. So she went to a corn-chandler in Ewell, and asked for the same article; whose answer was, "I have only the *refuse of the barley, or tail corn, which I sell for swine and fowls.*" My wife told him that would do, but did not inform him for what use it was intended. This was ground at the mill, and was very cordially received by us, for the love of God which we enjoyed in our hearts, more than counterbalanced all the poverty we laboured under: for I well knew *it was decreed by God himself, that his people should have tribulation in this world, but in Christ Jesus they should have peace.* And this love made the yoke easy and the burden light; for if at any time a murmuring thought entered my mind, it was soon quelled by considering that Christ lived on the alms of his poor followers, and that he was worse off than either the foxes or the birds—

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birds—it being said, *the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.* This has often made my bowels yearn within me, silenced all my murmurings, and dissolved my heart in gospel gratitude.

My dame and I now kept house at a very cheap rate—two shillings and sixpence *per week* carried us through tolerably well, and as for the rest of the world's dainties, we were satisfied without them; for we knew that the grace of God had enabled us to *chuse that good part that should never be taken from us*; therefore *Patience* had (in a manner) *her perfect work*. We soon now raised the net sum of twenty shillings, and upwards; and I on the Saturday night sat off to Kingston, to get some of my cloaths out of pawn, but left money in the hands of my dame to get half a bushel of barley. It so happened, that that part of my apparel which I went to redeem, came so high with the interest, that I had not any money left to bring home. This was a great trial to us, because our poor little girl, which had been but lately weaned, had nothing to carry her through the week but bare barley cakes; and though it would eat barley, yet I could not endure to see it feed on that only. On the Monday following I went heavily to my work, and very much distressed to know how my poor little one was to live. I reflected with indignation on myself for parting with my money, thinking I had better gone without my cloaths, than
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have exposed my poor little one to want the necessities of life. But as I went over a bridge, that led to my work, I cast my eye on the right-hand side, and there lay a very large eel on the mud by the river-side, apparently dead. I went and caught hold of it, and soon found it was only asleep: I had hard work to hold it, but I got it safe out of the mud upon the grass, and then caught it and carried it home. My little one was very fond of it, and it richly supplied all its wants that day. But at night I was informed the eel was all gone, so the next day afforded me the same distress and trouble as the day before had done. When going to my work, cruelly reflecting on myself for parting with all my money, just as I entered the garden gates, I saw a partridge lie dead on the road. I took it up, and it was warm—I turned back and carried it home, and it richly supplied the table of our little one that day. A few days after this, my master told me he had found a partridge on the garden-walks also, but he said it stank: I told him I had found one a little before that time. He said two males had been fighting, and had killed each other, which was very common: but I was enabled to look higher.

Carnal reason always traces every thing from God to second causes, and there leaves them floating upon nothing: but faith traces them up to their first cause, and fixes them there—by which means God's hand is known, and himself glorified. I believe this bat-

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tle between the plumed warriors was proclaimed by the Lord : for if a sparrow falls not to the ground without God's leave, as the scriptures declare, I can hardly think a partridge does.

The third day arrived, and I was still in the same case as before ; but as I went to my work, I saw a *bird's nest* in one of the shrubs.—I went and examined it, and found it to be the nest of a large bird, with four young ones in it, just ready to fly. It was with much reluctance that I stormed and plundered the little simple citadel : but necessity hath no law ; therefore I was forced to rob the poor dam of her young, and leave her mourning and lamenting, while my young one lived upon her's.—However, I found it was no sin in God's sight. *If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young ones, or upon the eggs ; thou shalt not take the dam with the young ; but thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days, Deut. xxii. 6, 7.*

These birds served for that day very well ; but the next day found me still unprovided as before, and brought forth fresh work for *faith* and *prayer*. But *the morrow still took thought for the things of itself* ; for when I came to take the scythe in my hand, to mow the short grass, I looked into the *pond*, and there I saw three very large carp laying on the water, apparently

tently sick, and when my master came to me I told him of it, and he went and looked and said they were dead, and told me I might have them if I would, for they were not in season. However, they came in due season to me; and I found, morning after morning, there lay two or three of these fish at a time, dead, just as I wanted them; till I believe there was not one fish remaining in that pond alive that was six inches long, though I believe the pond was high three hundred feet long.

While I was musing on, and admiring the tender care of my God in his providence, and wondering what could move him thus to pity such a sinner, who was so unworthy of his grace, mercy, and truth, as well as of his providential regard, these words came to my mind, *He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish*, Psal. cv. 29.—Mrs. Webb, the woman before-mentioned, has often took part of these spoils, and the incredulous are very welcome to make an enquiry into the matter; and for this end I have informed them where she lives. My master told me he thought it was the heat of the sun that killed them, and *I believe it was*: but I knew that the sun and his heat were both from God, and that sun shined in good season for me. And it much amazed me to see God so kind, even in temporal matters;—it led me to search his blessed word for similar circumstances; and when I read of the distress and simple covenant of Jacob—of God's changing the colour of

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Laban's cattle, that they might change their master—and of God's blessing his simple means of peeling the rods, that the pregnant dams might look at them, and bring forth accordingly, and so setting the dams alonging to bring forth a motley progeny like the rods, which he set in the troughs, and the dream of the spangled ram begetting the spotted inheritance of faith; I could not help weeping, and admiring the unmerited goodness of my God in setting the birds of the air to war—sending the sun-beams with such a military force as to slay the inhabitants of the floods—suffering the eel to sleep till the hand of the necessitous had entangled him—and directing my eyes to the little lodgment of the birds, when all other supplies seemed to be cut off.—It so operated on my mind that I cannot describe the humility, compunction, love, joy, and peace, which I felt.—*Oh the goodness of God to the children of men!* I evidently saw, that both in providence and in grace, God is the same to us as he was to the saints in days of old, and that they had no pre-eminence over us in the covenant of grace at all; but that Jesus Christ was the same yesterday that he is to-day, and will be the same for ever. Let not these providences beget a notion in the weak of the flock of any partiality in God, knowing that *God is no respecter of persons*, but in every nation those that fear him and work righteousness, are accepted of him.

I found that my pay would hardly support my family with comfort, and it came into my mind that

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I could mend shoes if I tried at it. I accordingly sent my dame to Kingston to buy me some materials for this business, and I began on it, and became a decent proficient at it in a very little time; which helped me so much, that I got all my things out of pawn, and kept myself entirely out of debt. But it happened one night that my dame complained to me that she had nothing for the child but barley cake. I told her I had a job of cobbling to do, and I would sit up that night and do it, and in the morning the work might be carried home, and peradventure we might get the money: so we sat up and worked together till between eleven and twelve o'clock, at which time I heard a person call at my window; I went down and found several men on horseback, who enquired their way to *Malden Mills*. I went a little way to shew them, and when I left them, one of them gave me a shilling. I received it, and my very hair moved upon my head at the reflection of the daily providence of God. I mention this, because God says, *the gold and the silver is his*, and that it is *he only who maketh poor, and maketh rich*; and that it is *he who bringeth low and lifteth up*. These things so endeared God to me, that I often called him my *bank*—my *banker*—and my blessed *overseer*; and earnestly begged that he would condescend to be my *tutor*, my *master*, and my *provider*; and never leave me in the hands of mortals either for tuition, protection, or for temporal supplies—

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and I no longer envied the rich in this world; for if they were gracious, they only see one side of God's face, they having an independent stock in hand; and if graceless, they are of all flesh the *most miserable*—and I saw clearly the most eminent saints in the Bible were brought into low circumstances, as *Jacob, David, Moses, Isaac, Job, and Jeremiah*, and all the apostles, in order that the hand of Providence might be watched.

When harvest came on, my dame informed me that she should go to gleaning, in order to pick up some wheat to make bread with;—so she and I generally got up about three o'clock in the morning, and I gleaned with her till six, and then went to my work; but she continued till eight o'clock, and then went home with her corn, eat her breakfast, got the child up from bed, (which all this time had been left alone) and then she went off for the day. At this time I had begun to preach at Ewell Marsh, *which had made no small stir that way*; therefore the farmers drove my dame out of the fields, and the gleaners came about her like a shoal of small birds attending the funeral of a dead hawk, and swore that "*parsons wives should not glean there. What, said they, wives of the clergy go to gleaning!*"—I own it is not a good fight, nor a good sign, to see Levites gleaning; but if the blind guides steal the offerings of God, which should feed the Levites, the Levites then must work, or starve.

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In scripture a gospel minister is compared to an ox, and he must *take Christ's yoke*, and learn to draw; and when his day's work is ended, he must tread out the corn, if required; and if God uses him to *plough up the fallow ground of the heart*, he must expect to work hard and fare hard. To be a *gospel labourer* is a rare thing; but to be a dumb dog—to lay at the bone, and forget to bark is very common. We read in scripture of *the oxen ploughing, while the asses were feeding beside them*, Job i. 14.—But still God's hand was seen, for if they drove her out of one field, she was surely directed into another, where she often found them carrying the corn, and then she got the first and prime gleanings of the whole field. At six o'clock I went in search after her, and gleaned with her till nine, or as long as we could see an ear of corn; and when I went after her, I knew not where she was, nor how far she had been chased that day: and whether she was a mile or two miles distant, I always went that way which my mind led me, and constantly went as straight to her as if I had actually known where she was, and never missed her track; but found her every night, the whole five weeks, whether she was east, west, north, or south. And when I came, I was entertained with an account of all the chacings her pursuers had given her, and how they had threatened to rob her of her corn.—I told her *Boaz* was not in the *field*; if he had, he would not have served her so.—It is true, we use his words

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in our church service, *The Lord be with you*; and the reapers piously reply, *And with thy spirit*; but this language is now quite out of fashion in our harvest fields.

But notwithstanding their chasing the *clergyman's wife* from field to field, she gleaned as much or more than Ruth of old did. As for our harvest, that was piled up on each side of our bed, which served instead of curtains; so we slept, defended with the staff of life, having all our tithes in our bed-chamber, and which by the by I believe was one of the smallest *tithe-barns* in Christendom. Our corn was threshed out in the chamber, and winnowed on the Marsh, and a sheet served for a barn floor.—The whole quantity of our wheat amounted, when meted, to four bushels and a quartern, exclusive of some pease, and a little barley.—My dame threshed out the corn and baked the bread, and I paid her so much *per loaf*, as an encouragement to her future industry, and to buy her such necessaries as she wanted.—God visiting me with severe poverty without, and conscience keeping me strictly honest within, drove me to be as severe with my wife as Paul was with his flock, when he made a law, that if *any would not work, neither should they eat*.

I should not have entertained my reader with such a long account about gleanings, if God had not left so much of it upon record in the book of Ruth, where we have an account of that spiritual proselyte
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going to glean, in order to support herself and her mother-in-law;—yea, the grain that she gleaned, and the quantity she gleaned also;—and of the good hand of her God in guiding her to the field of Boaz, a man whom Providence had appointed to be her future partner in life, and who was her husband in law; reckoning, that the covetous and unbelieving kinsman, whom Heaven refused to honour with such a wife, declined his lawful right, for fear that his obedience to God's command should bring him to poverty. But God, who commands us *not to be unequally yoked together*, guided her to *the field of Boaz*, a man who did not curse her for her religion, but who commended her for her faith, chastity, and industry; and added the blessing of God to the begun work of grace, and wished her *a full reward of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings she was come to trust.*

In the following winter the Lord sent a very deep snow, which lay a considerable time on the ground. At this time our wheat was of great use to us, as it supplied us with bread for two or three months. But we were shortly brought into another strait through this snow, because we used to buy faggots of our landlady to burn, which was all the fuel we could get at this time: our landlady one night informed us, that she had but ten *faggots* left, which she must keep for herself, as there was no likelihood of the snow going away; therefore she told us she could
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fell no more. To this I replied, that if she was in trouble for fear of suffering with the cold, when she had so much wood by her, surely we had much more cause to fear, who had a young child. However, I begged of God that night to take away the snow, or send us something to burn, that our little one might not perish with the cold, and the next day morning the snow was all gone—*God had sent out his word, and melted it; he had caused his wind to blow, and the water to flow, Psal. cxlvii. 18.*

After some time our wheat was gone, and we were obliged to eat barley again;—and our having paid away our money to redeem our cloaths, we began to get very short of other necessary apparel, which we soon got;—for my working by day, and cobbling at nights, and living upon barley, we kept ourselves out of debt, and tolerably decent in cloaths. But this living on barley was attended with very bad consequences; for as I had never been used to it before, and as I lived on it almost entirely, without mixing it with wheat, it threw a violent humour into my eyes, and for some months I was in danger of losing my sight; but by using one simple thing or other, they got better.—My second daughter, too, brought the same humour into the world with her, and both myself and the child had it more or less for some years, though not so violently bad as at first. I have often viewed this affliction on the child with great grief; but in answer to prayer, God healed her eyes
and

and mine too, so that our sight was perfectly recovered.

When harvest again came on, we went to glean-
ing, as before, and got no less than five bushels of
corn; but my dame was pursued as formerly;—for
my continuing to preach had alarmed and much of-
fended almost the whole parish, therefore they were
more fierce in persecuting her. On the other hand,
some were afraid to go nigh her, for fear of catching
a religious infection;—for they reported abroad, that
there was *something of a power* that seized upon them,
and that if we once got them to hear what we had to
say, there was no getting away from our religion;—
for this *secret something* that *seized* them held them so
fast, that they must immediately change their own
religion.—I have known some men (whom I have
met on the road) go quite out of the path, and take
a circle in the field, rather than pass me on the road,
just as if that *secret something* could not *seize* them *whilst*
walking on the grass, as well as on the foot-path.

I now began to lose favour with my master. I had
preached among the poor people till some of them
refused to work on the Lord's day.—My master en-
quired into the cause of that, and was informed that
the gardener had been preaching to them against pro-
faneing the Lord's day;—therefore some would not
work on that day, and others murmured, because
they were compelled to labour, while others were
exempt. This provoked my master much, and he
told.

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told me he should expect me to work in the garden on the Lord's day. I told him I did not chuse to do that: he then swore at me, and said that I should do it, or I should not work for him. I replied, that I would not, if I lost my employment:—so in a few days after, he told me, with several imprecations, to work no more for him.—He owed me a trifle for a few days work; but as he did not offer to pay me, I never asked him for it. He knew at the same time that my wife was great with child, and ready to ly-in; and he also knew I was very poor.—I was informed that he expected me to come back with a *suppliant knee*; but I was determined that I would not sell my conscience for a *loaf of barley bread*, as it had cost my Saviour so much to *purge it*; therefore I set off for Thames Ditton, and carried coals in the river for fourteen months, at ten shillings *per week*, and preached during that time on the Lord's day, and once in the week in the evening. All this time I suffered much both in body and in mind, and found that the iniquity of those who wrought wth me, began to harden my heart; therefore I was determined to leave it, and go to my old business again. I got three or four days work at Moulsey: but a farmer came to my master, and told him to discharge me; for at this time I had begun to preach out of doors, and it was at Moulsey where I committed this great offence of preaching Jesus Christ in the high road. On this account I was turned out of employment,

and

and remained so for three weeks, during which time a gentleman at Mitcham sent for me to come over there the week following, to preach in their meeting, as he had long entertained a great desire of hearing me.

A few days before this, a gentleman had given me an old black coat and waistcoat, which being very large, made coat, waistcoat, and breeches for me. So on the day appointed I put on my parsonic attire, which was the first time I ever appeared clad in that colour—my usual appearance being more like the ploughman, or the fisherman; but now poor Lazarus appeared in the external habit of a priest—and surely the good hand of my God was with me, and I went and delivered my message in his name.—As it had been reported that a *coalheaver* was coming to preach, there was a great many people gathered together to hear me; and when I had finished my discourse, a gentleman came to me, and gave me a *new book*, and blessed me; a gentlewoman, too, put a letter into my hand, and laid an injunction on me, not to open it till I got home. When I opened it, there was a guinea in it, and four shillings, with these words written, “Take this as from the hand of the “Lord, for the labourer is worthy of his hire,” *Luke x. 17.*

These kind providences of God did wonderfully endear the Lord to me, and brought me to live by the faith of him for a supply of all my wants; and
indeed

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indeed I was obliged to do it, for I could get no employment. And though I had preaching enough for a bishop, yet I had nothing coming in to live upon for so doing: my flocks were as poor as myself, at least the generality of them; and my family still continued increasing.

In this dilemma, a professor of the gospel, who was by trade a *shoemaker*, asked me one day to come to him, and learn to make little *childrens' shoes*, which at last I agreed to, and was taught to make them (though in a very rough manner) in a short space of time.

I now took my work home to my own house, and wrought there; and a few poor journeymen who attended my ministry, who were single men, (and therefore not so poor as their pastor) gave me some tools, till at length I became a *shoemaker*, and worked at it for my bread, while the love of Christ constrained me to preach for the good of souls, without making the gospel a burden to any. I was now in as bad a state as *poor Paul*, who preached the gospel freely, and made tents for his livelihood; his own hands ministering to his necessities, when his tongue was ministering to the necessities of thousands. If he had preached up heathen morality, he need not have fared so hard; for the world loves that, and the preachers of it. The Saviour says, *the world loves her own*, and she never serves her own children as she does the children of God.

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As I began this business so late in my lifetime, I was but a very slow hand at it; therefore I was obliged to turn my *help-meet* into a *shop-mate*, that is, I learned my wife to close the shoes which I made, and both of us could earn about eight shillings per week. At this time I had five times a week to preach constantly, in which case I was forced to lay my Bible in a chair by me, and now and then read a little, in order to furnish myself with matter for the pulpit. It sometimes happened that I was under fore *temptations* and *desertions*; the Bible, too, appeared a sealed book, inasmuch that I could not furnish myself with a text; nor durst I leave my work in order to study, or read the Bible; if I did, my little ones would soon want bread: my work would also run very cross at those times: I, therefore, found the ministry of the gospel to be work enough for any man, without *leaving the word of God to serve tables*.

After I had been about eight or ten months at this work, my master failed in business, and nobody else would employ me. I was now a fortnight, or more, out of employment, which sorely tried me indeed; for it so happened that we were forced to put our little ones to bed one night without a supper, and their dinner was a very scanty one; and when they saw me look into the cupboard, and shut the door again without giving them any thing, they lisped out some very pathetic, though broken, accents, expressive of want, which touched my parental feelings
very

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very sorely, and took away my rest for that night. In the morning I got up and went out, but where to go I knew not; and to stay at home and see my little ones want bread, I could not endure the thought of. But these words were sweet and suitable to me, *he hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom*: and I well knew it was *easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God*. In this miserable situation I knew not where to go; if I left off preaching, and run from the work, as Jonah did, *I should deny the Lord that bought me*.—Though I was willing to work, yet none would employ me, on account of my religion—and if I stayed at home, my little ones were crying for bread. Indeed, I should often have ran from the work of God, if his terrors had not stood on my conscience in battle array against me. At this time no book would suit me but the Lamentations of Jeremiah—to these I constantly fled for comfort; for I often, like him, was for running away, but could not; therefore God fulfilled his word—*they shall be my people, and shall not depart from me*. I went that morning as far as Kingston, but where I was to be directed to find relief, I knew not: however, just as I came into the town, it came suddenly in my mind to go to Mr. Chapman, who lived on Hounslow-Heath, a person who had known me for some years, even before I or he knew the Lord: but about the same time that I was called by grace, he was called also; and

and he had often invited me to come and visit him, which I had not done. But now I obeyed the impulse which I felt; and accordingly went over Kingston Bridge, directly to *Hounslow-Heath*, where I found him and his wife at home. I was, however, determined not to make my deep distress known to them, but intended to watch the good hand of my God in this journey.—The good man and his wife received me very affectionately, and after they had kindly entertained me, loaded me home with many simple dainties for the children, though at that time they knew not how I had left them. And it came to pass when I departed, that the good man walked two miles with me, and when he was on the road, he gave me a guinea, which I refused; and told him if he would give me half-a-guinea, I would accept of, provided his wife had been acquainted with it. He told me she had; and I took the half-guinea from him, and wondered how I should pay the fare of the bridge, to get home, fearing they would not be able to give me change: but I cast my eyes on the ground, and there lay a penny, which served for the purpose of paying the toll of the bridge; so I got safe home, and was received there with a hearty welcome.

As I had lost all my employment in shoe-making, I was obliged to try another branch of business:—I therefore commenced *cobler*; but none would employ me in this business, except those who attended my ministry—consequently, sometimes I had work, and

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sometimes I had none. This branch of business I found attended with many inconveniencies: for it often happened at the beginning of the week, that I had little to do, and at the latter part, rather more than I could get done; likewise sitting up till twelve o'clock on the Saturday night, and having eleven miles to walk, and three times to preach on the Lord's day, rendered my labours too hard for me, as my living was very inconsiderable: however, God made this circumstance of great use to my soul.

I had naturally a very great flow of spirits, and this poor way of living gradually brought on an inward weakness, attended with the loss of appetite;—and this weakness rendered me incapable of taking proper nourishment, which at times my labours rendered very necessary. I could drink nothing but water, or small beer, for some years together, which at times brought me so low, that I was obliged to girt my stomach with an handkerchief as tight as I could bear it, in order to gather strength, to enable me to deliver three discourses a-day. At length I got so low, that one pint of good *small beer* rendered me incapable of a steady walk; and Satan violently tempted me on this head. Some of my friends, who saw the case that I was in, and fearing that I should shortly come to an end, laboured hard to dissuade me from this mode of living, but in vain; sometimes they would mix my small beer with a little ale, which I could immediately detect, and was apt to

view

view them my enemies for so doing: but they did this, fearing that I should throw myself into a consumption, and that one little branch of the *Church of Christ* might sustain a loss by it. For five years I went on in this manner, till there was scarcely *one step between me and death*: but I gradually got rid of this habit, as the Lord appeared more precious to me in a way of providence, and God sanctified it to the good of my soul; for this poverty and bad living brought many infirmities on me, which have at times lain as a *canker worm* at the root of my natural levity. I began now clearly to see that God intended to establish me as a preacher of the gospel, by the many doors which he opened before me, as also from the circumstance of many souls being awakened through my means.

I found it, however, impossible to preach five or six times a-week, and carry on the business of cobbling at the same time; especially, as it generally came in so fast at the latter end of the week—a time when I wanted to study the scriptures, in order to furnish myself with matter for the Lord's day. I determined, therefore, to give up this employment, and continue in the work of God *only*, however much I might suffer by it. In consequence of this resolution, I went to a poor cobbler, who lived in the same place with me, and to him I gave my *kit of tools*, threw myself entirely on the propitious arms of kind

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Providence, and gave myself wholly to the ministry of the word and prayer.

At this time I had left my ready-furnished lodgings, and rented a little cottage, at three pounds eighteen shillings *per annum*; and we had about half as much furniture in it, as a porter would carry at one load.

Having thus left off my cobbling business, Providence exercised my faith and patience very sharply at times, and suffered me to get a little behind-hand in the world, which caused me to cry and pray day and night; and, in answer to prayer, God sent to my house a gentleman of great property, who is very much noted in the religious world for liberality;—and after he had staid with me a few hours, he ordered his carriage, and at his departure gave me five guineas, which I was amazed at, as he was a stranger to me, and one whom I never saw before. This served to buy me some few household necessities, and also to pay off the debt which I had contracted.—Oh, who would not chuse the precious life of dependency on God, when the tender regard of Providence in our poverty is so clearly seen in those rich supplies, which are poured forth in answer to the simple, though powerful, prayer of faith!

At this time I stood in great need of linen, and also of a suit of cloaths, my old black cloaths having begun to get very bad.—I often begged this favour of God, agreeable to his own word, *If God so clothe the*
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*the grass, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the
 even, will he not much more clothe you, oh ye of little
 faith!* But God exercised my patience long, and
 taught me the necessity of importunity in prayer;
 and at last he answered me by terrible things in righ-
 teousness, for he sent a violent storm of persecution,
 which, from its proving intolerable, obliged me to
 seek redress from the law of the land, as I was le-
 gally licensed. My appeal, however, proved in vain;
 for, upon the trial, my licence proved an improper
 one, from the word *teacher* or *preacher* being left out
 of it; which was their fault, not mine, as I had le-
 gally applied, and procured it legally.—I was now
 obliged to go to London, and get another licence;—
 and here the answer to my former prayers appeared.
 —I was obliged to tarry in London all night—and as
 there was a parson in town who had long wanted to
 see me, not from any personal knowledge of me, but
 from various reports he had heard of the Lord's
 dealings with me, I endeavoured to find him out,
 and I accordingly did:—he received me very courte-
 teously, and entertained me very kindly, at a time of
 my undergoing a sharp trial,

As answers to prayer now seemed to be wholly de-
 nied, my faith in God's providence began to fail;
 and in very deed I was determined to leave my mi-
 nisterial work, and go and settle at Guildford, where
 I thought I could get employment as a gardener, and
 preach to my little flock at Woking on the Lord's

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day.—In order to accomplish this with some degree of conscience, I endeavoured to get a supply of ministers for the various places I preached at. But all my efforts were in vain: and indeed there was little encouragement for any to undertake to supply them, as they were so distant from London, and as it was in much opposition that the cause was carried on;—beside, there were neither *tithes*, *offerings*, nor *surplice fees*, attending their labours.—Those who undertook the work, must have gone on this *warfare* entirely *at their own expence*.

As I could not possibly get any assistance in my ministerial labours, I knew not how to go on, as I had no cloaths fit to be seen in.—I suffered too even for want of the common necessaries of life; for I had as much travelling and preaching as I was able to do, if I had lived ever so well; but as I was obliged to live so very low, I was hardly able to go through the work in any shape.

The good man whom I have before mentioned, and at whose house I lodged that night, purposed that I should go into Suffex, to preach at the place of his nativity. I answered, the apparel I then had on was all the cloaths I was possessed of, and therefore I was really not fit to be seen any where, and that I was likewise in debt. He asked me if I would stay and preach in one of his rooms in the evening to a few friends, whom he would invite. I complied with his request, and accordingly preached; and three gentlemen

gentlemen gave me each a guinea;—the good man also went to some of his friends, and made it up nine guineas, with which sum I got proper cloathing, and other necessaries; and there was a little money left to pay some debts which I had contracted.—Thus I went home with a full answer to my prayers, and in my second suit of parsonic attire. This circumstance much encouraged my faith in God's providence, and caused me perpetually to beg of God to be my only *provider, teacher, and master*; and that he would always direct my steps and supply my wants, and not leave me dependent on the arm of mortals. In my prayers I often made this my plea—that as he had called me without the instrumentality of any preacher, and sent me out without the approbation or disapprobation of any one, and had in a way of providence opened many doors before me, and blessed my labours to the good of many souls—that he would also let his Providence appear to me as I might stand in need of it—that I might not be burdened with cares about *what I should eat, or what I should drink, or wherewithal I should be clothed*; but that I might devote body, soul, time and talents, to the glory of his name, and to the good of his chosen.—These petitions God has been pleased to answer in some measure ever since.

At my return from London, I could not help making my boast of God, even in the pulpit; and as my persecutors had burnt me in effigy a little while be-

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fore, I told my audience that God had sent me a *new* suit of cloaths as it were out of the ashes, they having burnt a suit of cloaths, with which they clothed the effigy, not much unlike my old suit.

I had now a pleasing gale of prosperity for some time; but shortly after, another cloud of frowning providences gathered thick over my head, and kept me long in suspense, until I had run fourteen or fifteen pounds in debt—a sum which I had never owed before.—The greatest debt which I had ever contracted amounted only to three or four pounds; but as my faith in Providence had been sharply tried, and had gathered some strength by these trials, a greater burden was laid on me; and thus I found Faith's task to be always proportionable to her strength. In the midst of this trouble, the little flock at Woking desired me to take the charge of them, and to be ordained over them, to which I consented, and gave my promise.—On my road home, however, after I had given my promise, Satan violently tempted me; and unbelief and carnal reason fell in with the temptation.—I was tempted for having refused some calls in the country, where the people would have supported me as their pastor, if I would have accepted of their call;—but now I had agreed to take the charge of a flock that could never support me;—I should be for ever tied down from accepting any other call;—that my family was still increasing;—
that

that I was deeply in debt;—that my cloaths were got as bad as ever;—that my year was now out;—and that my gracious Master had not given me a new livery, nor was there any appearance of it.

Having waded some time in this dreadful flood, I began at length to reason from past experiences, that God had hitherto been gracious; and as he had set me to work, I must look to him for my wages.—But this Satan attempted to overthrow, by suggesting that I never was so much in debt before. This I knew to be true; so my faith began to fail, and I mistrusted the providence of God.—But these words came so sweet to my mind, and with so much power, that it bore down all that the tempter could suggest: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*

The next day evening I preached at Hammer-smith; and when I came down from the pulpit, a gentleman stepped up to me, and told me to call at his house, for he had ordered a taylor to call and measure me for a suit of cloaths, which he intended to make me a present of. As soon as the words were out of his mouth, the above-recited scripture recoiled on my mind with power, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* I hung down my head, and wept for joy at the goodness of my God to one who was so *slow of heart to believe.* In a few days my cloaths were

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were made, and I went and received them.—This was one sharp blow to my unbelief.

Now, the principal and most difficult work of faith was, to reconcile my mind as to my large debt being discharged:—and how this was to be done, I knew not; but this I knew, that I had not imprudently presumed on God's providence, having contracted it merely to supply my wants; and as the Lord made me trust him for the fulfilment of his promises, I was forced to get others to trust me, till my faith could get her wages in.—Thus I scored my blessed Master up, and in his own time he always paid it off with honour.

Soon after this, my friend in London asked me to preach at his house, and I agreed to it; and when the day arrived, I went; but he told me he had consulted the managers of Margaret-street Chapel about my preaching there;—that they had agreed to it, and that it was advertised that I should preach there that night. At this I was sorely offended, as I was very much averse to preaching in London, on several accounts; first, because I had been told it abounded so much with all sorts of errors, that I was afraid of falling into them, as there were so many that lay in wait to deceive. Another reason for my objecting to preach in town was, that I had no learning, and therefore feared I should not be able to deliver myself with any degree of propriety; and as I knew nothing of *Greek* or *Hebrew*, nor even of the *English*
grammar,

grammar, that I should be exposed to the *scourging tongue* of every *critic* in London. However, I preached that night, and soon after I found myself induced, by sundry persuasions, to preach the word of God in that very chapel. During many weeks I laboured under much distress of mind, respecting my want of ability to preach in this great metropolis. But God at last removed that distress, by his condescending to bless his word, even from my mouth; and he was pleased to deliver a young man from a capital error by the first discourse I ever delivered at that place, which appeared not only a great encouragement to me at that time, but also a prelude to that future success which I might expect under God's promised blessing.

As I was a native of the *Wild of Kent*, which is none of the most polite parts of the world, I retained a good deal of my native dialect, and many expressions, which, to the ears of a grammarian, sounded very harsh and uncouth. This circumstance caused many unsanctified critics to laugh and cavil at me;—but when God permitted me to drop promiscuously into company with any of those who were so very learned, and they began to pour contempt on some of my expressions, I generally found them very deficient in the work of the Spirit on their own souls: and though some of them seemed very wise in gospel doctrines, yet I could easily find that this knowledge was borrowed from commentators, because they
appeared

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appeared great strangers to the experience of them on their hearts, and also to the happy enjoyment of them; which I knew they would be able to give an account of, if ever they received them wet with *deus* and warm with *love* from heaven, in *answer* to the prayer of *faith*. It is true, some have often confounded me in the sense and meaning of words, and likewise in the original texts, yet I found I could as much confound them in the sensible operations of the HOLY GHOST, agreeable to the word of God; and by my own experience of the Spirit's work, could overthrow some expressions of theirs from the Hebrew language, especially those who laboured to overthrow the divinity of the Son of God, the manifestation of whom to my own soul, agreeable to his word, has enabled me to foil the most accomplished Arian I have ever yet contended with upon that point. The only way to prove Christ's divinity is, to go to him when overwhelmed with guilt and horror, and to pray to him as the eternal God; and if he appears the object of faith and prayer, and delivers us from the *wrath* of God, the guilt of sin, the power of Satan, the fear of death, the curse of the law, and eternal damnation, and blesses us with pardon, peace, love, and liberty, he *shall be* the eternal God of our souls' salvation, though Satan be the god of all this unhallowed world. But though the *Arian* talks of Christ as a *stone* of help, yet if they allow him to be no more than a creature, they might

as well call him a sandy foundation at once, as a *rock*; for all flesh is *dust*, and to *dust* it *must* return. And if he had not been God, he certainly would have seen corruption as well as other creatures have done: and that he was raised from the dead, is not owing to his being man, but to his being God—*put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit*. His flesh being raised without seeing corruption, is owing to his being the Son of God with power, and having immortality and eternal life in himself, as the self-existent and independent JEHOVAH. And as God the Father prepared a body for him, and he willingly came and took it on him, to do his Father's will—so he wore that fleshly garment till he had finished the work his Father gave him to do, and then dipped it in blood, and sanctified himself for our sakes, or sanctification; he then laid it down for our life, and raised it again for our justification;—took it at last to heaven as *the first fruits of them that slept*, and appears in it as an eternal temple, wherein dwells the glorious SHECHINAH, or all the fulness of the godhead bodily. And all our access to God is only through that rent vail of his flesh; and he that allows Christ to be no more than a creature, denies all the intrinsic glory of the eternal godhead that ever dwelt between the cherubims, and condemns every hoping soul that ever dwelt beneath the wings of the Almighty.

Upon the whole, I found my ignorance of Greek and Hebrew, to be no impediment in the way of the Holy

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Holy Ghost's power; for I firmly believed, that God had *written his law on my heart*; and I believe what the Holy Ghost writes on the mind of man, is always agreeable to the original text; and that if there are any errors in our English translation, the blessed Spirit will never impress the mind of God's elect from a false copy, nor appear as the broad seal of heaven to ratify a lie.

But I shall now return to my former subject, and inform my reader how my faith managed the large debt which I mentioned before, God having long exercised my faith and patience, until I began to despair of ever getting out of it. It so happened, that a capital error crept into the church of God at Horsham, in Sussex; and some friends sent for me, as it was a place at which I had often preached, and indeed this was the first place that I ever preached at in a public manner. I therefore complied with their request; and in my way thither, I was blessed with one of the most comfortable and lively frames of mind that I had ever enjoyed.—This frame was attended with a most delightful chain of heavenly meditations, which, when I arrived at my journey's end, I committed to paper, and sent to a friend in town—which circumstance, under God, paved a way for my being invited to preach at Chelsea, which invitation I accepted of. I was afterward informed that a confirmed Arian came out of curiosity to hear me; and though I knew nothing of this circumstance, I was yet

yet led, in the course of my sermon, to be very severe against the destructive tenets of that sect. In consequence of this, the person went home convinced, and upon his arrival there, he was seized with a fit of illness, during which Christ was graciously pleased to manifest his atonement to his conscience.—When he felt the power, he cried out, “*The darkness is now past, and the true light shineth.*” He continued in this divine extasy till his body dropped into the jaws of death, which was about a fortnight after the above discourse was delivered.

But to return to my subject.—A gentleman, famous for a liberal turn of mind, asked me home to his house to lodge, which I gladly accepted of; and in the evening he enquired about my health, ministerial success, and also concerning my circumstances. As God alone knew my wants; so none but God could have inclined his heart to relieve me.—At my departure he gave me ten guineas. This precious answer to prayer, coming so seasonable in a time of need, put my discontent to the blush, dashed infidelity itself out of countenance, and stopped the mouth of an accusing devil.

I found God’s promises to be the Christian’s BANK NOTES, and a living faith will ever draw on the divine BANKER; yea, and the Spirit of prayer, and a deep sense of wants, will give an heir of promise a filial boldness at the inexhaustible BANK of heaven.

Indeed

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Indeed the providence of God is a great mystery; nor could I unriddle it, even while I was daily exercised with it.—I have known, during my residence at *Ewell*, that I have often begun the week with eighteen or twenty pence, sometimes with two shillings, at other times with half-a-crown;—and we have lived through the whole week upon that only, without contracting any debt;—and I found it impossible at the week's end, upon the best reflection I could make, to tell how I and mine had been supported through the week. At other times I have found that my craving appetite had lost its keenness, insomuch that I have been able to work hard for two days together without any food at all;—and sometimes God has indulged me with such heavenly views of a glorified state, and entertained my mind with such sweet contemplations on futurity, that my *dinner hour* has passed unnoticed; nor have I once had a thought about it, till four or five o'clock, or near the time of leaving my labour. But these blessed acts of God's providential regard, are nothing new— for he took away the appetite of Moses and Elijah for forty days together:—and he is the same God still;—nor is his bountiful hand at all shortened, though the faith of the necessitous has so often stretched it out.

At my return, I went and discharged my debts as far as the ten guineas would go, and left the other standing on the book, which Providence used as a future exercise for my faith. About that time I was
ordained

ordained over my little flock at Woking, and then I found Providence began to frown again, in order to keep me humble. However, all things worked together for my good;—for being kept daily dependent on God's providence by faith, I had the precious enjoyment of sweet communion with God; and every day did his providence and gracious care appear more or less over me.—I generally found those blessings the sweetest, which had caused me the most importunity in prayer.

Some time after this, I was brought into another strait, by receiving a letter which required me to give up one of my little flocks, and this happened to be one that was at that time my chief support. This plot was laid by a person who made a god of his wealth, and therefore he found fault with my sermons, conceiving that they were levelled at him.—And indeed the allegation was certainly well founded; for if a man has got the world *in his heart*, the preacher is sure of hitting him, if he should only *draw the bow at a venture*.

However, this also worked together for good, for it drove me to London; and when I left my own home on the Lord's day morning, my whole stock of money amounted to no more than twopence: of this I took the one half, and left my dame the other; one halfpenny of this I paid at Hampton Court bridge; and soon after a poor man asked an alms of me, to whom I gave the other halfpenny; and then

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I besought the Lord not to send any person to ask alms of me, until his bountiful hand had supplied my own wants. However, this trial also worked together for my good; for it was the means of bringing me to preach constantly in London, and accordingly many who had heard me in town met with me at my friend's house, and invited me to preach at Margaret Chapel:—several friends also sent for me to their houses, and gave me a guinea, and others half-a-guinea, till I had enough to discharge the debt which I owed.

I now wanted to return home, fearing that my family would want bread; but just before the time of my departure, a friend from Richmond arrived, who informed me he had been to Ditton, and supplied the wants of my family; for he said he had been informed of the affair, and guessed how my pocket stood; therefore he had carried my wife some money.—*Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*

At my return home I discharged my debts, and for a time went sweetly on, under the sunshine both of Providence and Grace; and God sent me back again to the flock which I had been commanded to leave by the mouth of a rich and covetous professor.

But as the life of faith consists in bearing the cross of Christ, we must not expect to be long without trials.—Providence soon frowned on me again, and
I got

I got behind hand as usual. This happened, too, at the time my wife was lying-in; and indeed she had not those necessaries of life which are needful at such a time.—The nurse came and told her there was no *tea* in the house:—my wife replied, “Set the kettle on, if there is not.”—The nurse (who was a daughter of mine in the faith) replied, “You have no tea, nor can you get any:”—my wife replied, “Set on the kettle.”—She did so; and before it boiled, a woman (with whom at that time we had no acquaintance) came to the door, and told the nurse that she had brought some tea as a present for my wife. Soon after my dame got over her in-lying, tidings were brought to us, that a gospel minister was coming down to Kingston to preach an evening lecture, and to break bread to the congregation.—I had a great desire to go to the table, and also to have my child baptized at the same time: but I never could go from the Lord’s table without offering my mite; and at this time it so happened that I had no money in my pocket, and therefore could not go. However, I begged of God to send me a little money some way or other for this purpose, and I verily believed I should have it. I waited till within half an hour of the time to go, and then I began to think I should be disappointed: but just as unbelief began to call to murmuring and complaining, I heard a man ride up to my door as I was in my study, at the back part of the house; and

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when I heard him ride away again, I called to my wife, and told her to make haste and get ready to go.—“Get ready!” said she, “why you know we have no money!”—“Poh! poh!” said I, “God has sent the money;” and I began to get ready. And true enough it was that God had sent it; for that was all the business the man had with us, namely, to give us some money. Surely it was God that sent him, and none else; for *if the hairs of our head are all numbered*, we have reason to believe that our wants are; and that if God certainly keeps our hairs from falling to the ground, he supplies our wants also.

Soon after this, I was obliged to borrow a guinea of a certain friend, and promised to pay him on the Thursday night following, if he would call for it; and I begged of God to send it me from some quarter or other, and I firmly believed he would do it. The day before my friend was appointed to call on me for the money, I was to go out to preach among many of my friends, and I earnestly begged of God to send it me that day, if it was his will and pleasure; and I had no more doubt of God's sending it, than I had of my own existence: however, I returned home without it, and wondered how it could be, when the Saviour says, *Whatsoever ye shall ask believing; ye shall have it, and nothing shall be impossible unto you.* I told the Lord that I prayed in faith for it, and that I firmly believed I should have it, but
had

had not got it. This text of scripture came with power to my mind, *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* I had from that time a sweet view of that text of scripture, and delivered several discourses from it, which God seemed to bless with power.—But to return to my subject—As soon as I came home, I began to fret because I had not got the money that I expected; but still the text answered me, *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, &c.* I replied, “If it be the substance, it is as sure as the thing itself.” Upon this, the man came into my study, and I was going to make an apology to him; but before I opened my mouth, the good man said, “I come to desire you not to think of paying me the guinea, for I have made you a present of it, and God bless you with it.”—As soon as he was gone, the same passage of scripture recoiled upon my mind again with much comfort, *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, &c.* and indeed so I clearly saw it to be both in spirituals and temporals. Thus my faith was not confounded, nor my hope disappointed; all my trouble sprung from my own sin, which was *limiting the Holy One of Israel*: my way was—expecting the money to pay the debt; but God’s way was—to take away from my creditor the expectation of payment.

About that time a person came to me, and offered to let the house to me which he then lived in, as he was going to leave it. I own I had a desire after it,

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because it had a large garden belonging to it, which I could look after myself, and raise many vegetables which would help to support my family:—the garden was walled in also; which I much admired, as I was very fond of retirement; and there was a stable, a brewhouse, and every other convenience in it; and the rent was only six pounds ten shillings *per annum*. But the man told me it would cost seven or eight pounds to take the fixtures of the house:—I therefore gave up the thoughts of it, as I had no view of raising such a sum. So I drove it from my thoughts, though I much wanted it.

A few days after this, a friend called at my house to see me, and I told him about the house, and shewed it to him. He persuaded me to take it, which I accordingly did; but was to stay a few weeks, till the person I was to succeed could provide himself with another situation, suitable for his business. I therefore asked God in prayer to enable me to purchase the fixtures of this house, if it was agreeable to his sovereign will and pleasure; for I knew the *bounds of our habitation were fixed by him*.—Accordingly, the providence of God appeared so conspicuous, that I shortly got the money together to pay for the fixtures: but the person desired me to wait a few weeks longer, as he had been disappointed of the house he expected to go into; so I waited two months, during which time I had been forced to spend all the money.

Then

Then I begged of God to frustrate my going into the house at all, if it was displeasing to him, though I much wanted it; because my little cot was placed in a very vulgar neighbourhood, and the windows being so very low, I could not study at any window without being exposed to the view of my enemies, who often threw stones through the glass, or saluted me with a volley of oaths or imprecations. This was very disagreeable to me. In my public ministrations I expected nothing else, but the *cruel venom of asps*; but to commune with my God in private, was all the sweet refuge I had to fly to, and the only door of hope that was open for comfort and relief. However, Providence soon began to shine again; and indeed I had nothing else to live on from year's end to year's end, but what God sent me in answer to prayer. But at this time a person gave me five guineas, which kind providence I rather wondered at. But the following night I had a dream—(I hope my brethren *will not hate me yet the more because of my dreams*, Gen. xxxvii. 5. seeing we have a scriptural warrant for the relation of it; *He that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word*, Jer. xxiii. 28.)—My dream was, that the person before-mentioned sent to me, informing me he was going to leave his house, and the things were to be appraised on Friday morning, and he should expect me to pay him the money down for the fixtures. I said in my dream, “Lord, thou

“ knowest I cannot go, for I have not got money
 “ enough.” There came an answer to me in my
 dream, “ Go to Mr. Munday, cutler, at Kingston-
 “ upon-Thames, and he will lend you as much as
 “ you want.” I soon after awoke, and behold it
 was a dream! and therefore I took little notice of
 it. But in a few hours the person sent to me, to in-
 form me he was going to leave his house, and should
 expect me to come and see the things appraised the
 next day morning, and pay him for the same. Then
 I began to think it was more than a dream. The
 same night Mr. Munday of Kingston, called on me,
 and, to the best of my remembrance, never called
 at my house before. I accordingly asked him if he
 would lend me a little money; he replied, “ I will
 “ lend you all that I have in my pocket; and if you
 “ will call on me to-morrow at Kingston, I will lend
 “ you five pounds if you want it.” He accordingly
 lent me what he then had with him, and the next
 morning the things were appraised to me, and I paid
 for them, and had just nine shillings left.—There is
 the end of my dream.

My year was now expired, and I wanted a new par-
 sonic livery;—and in humble prayer I told my most
 blessed Lord and Master, “ that my year was out,
 “ and my apparel was bad—that I had nowhere to
 “ go to, but to him for these things;—and as he had
 “ promised to give his servants food and raiment, I
 “ hoped he would fulfil his promise to me, though
 “ one

“one of the worst of them.” But as I saw no signs of my livery coming, I began to omit praying for it; though God says, *For all these things I will be enquired of by the house of Israel, that I may do them for them.* But it fell out one day that I called on a poor man, who complained that he could not attend the word of God for the want of apparel. This drove me to praying again for my new suit of cloaths, that I might give my old ones to that poor man.—A few days after this, I was desired to call at a gentleman’s house, near London, which I accordingly did; and indeed it had been impressed on my mind for six weeks before this, that God would use that gentleman as an instrument to furnish me with my next suit:—and so it fell out; for I called on the gentleman, and when I left his house, he went a little way with me; and while we were on the road he said, “I think you want a new suit of cloaths:”—I answered, “Yes, Sir, I do; and I know a poor man that would be very glad of this which I have on, if my Master would furnish me with another;” and when he took his leave of me, he desired me to call on him the next morning, which I accordingly did; and he sent a taylor into the room to me, and honourably told me to be measured for what cloaths I chose, and a great coat also; and when I got them, I then furnished the poor man with my old suit. This was the fourth suit of apparel that my Master

gave

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gave me in this providential manner, in answer to the simple prayer of faith.

Soon after this, I was brought into another strait, which was, I had contracted a debt of five pounds for several necessaries which I wanted, such as linen and other things. I promised to pay it on such a day; and many prayers I put up that God would enable me to pay it according to my promise. At last the day arrived, and I had not one farthing to pay it. About the hour of ten, the bell rung at my gate: supposing it to be my creditor, I kneeled down, and begged of God not to send my creditor till he had sent me the money to pay him. It proved not to be the man I expected: but soon after the bell rung again, and I *kneeled down again, and prayed with the same words*; and was informed a stranger wanted to see me. I ordered him up stairs, who, when he came, had much to say to me about the things of God; and when he left me, gave me two guineas. Soon after this, I went to work in my garden, and another person, who lived at a great distance from me, came to speak to me, and gave me another guinea. After that, I took a walk in the fields, and met with two gentlemen who feared God, and who had come from London on purpose to see me, and they gave me two guineas. The next day my creditor came, and his money was ready for him.

I have omitted one providence which has just occurred to my mind, and which happened at the time
that

that I carried coals for my bread.—It fell out one night, that we were forced to put our little ones to bed without a supper, which grieved me much, and I got but little sleep on that account all night; but when I did, it was not long, for I soon awoke again, and lay and wept bitterly under my hard fate.—While I was weeping and praying, a person came to the window, and told me there was a load of *wooden hoops* come to the wharf from Dorking, in Surry, and that I must get up and unload them, which I soon did.—When I had done, the farmer told me he had brought me a little *meat pye*, and a little flaggon of cyder, as he had some time ago heard me say I was very fond of cyder. As soon as he was gone, I went home, and endeavoured to awake my young ones, but in vain: however, I set them up on their bolster, and they began to eat before they were fully awake.—Thus God sent food from a place so remote in answer to the groaning petition of my burdened heart. God grant, that if my reader is a poor Christian, he may take encouragement from these accounts to pray and watch the hand of God in every time of trouble, until he sees, agreeable to the promise, that God *causes all his goodness to pass before him.*

At this time I had many doors opened to me for preaching the gospel, and they lay very wide apart. I preached at Margaret-street in London; at Richmond also, at Ditton, at Cobham, at Woking, at Worplesdon,

Worplesdon, and at Farnham, in Surry; and I found it too much for my strength.—However, I kept on a considerable time in this way, till at last I was generally laid up sick about once a month. I found I had great need of a horse; but I feared I should not be able to keep it, if I had one: however, it happened that I had a very severe week's work to do; I was to go to Woking and preach on the Lord's day morning, and to Worplesdon in the afternoon, and from thence to Farnham in the evening:—I was to preach at Petworth, in Suffex, on the Monday evening, at Horsham on the Tuesday evening, and was to preach at Margaret-street Chapel on the Wednesday evening, and at Ditton on the Thursday evening; but before I could reach Ditton on the Wednesday, I was so far spent that I thought I must have lain down on the road, but with much difficulty reached home; and then I had to go to London. Finding myself wholly unable to perform all this labour, I went to prayer, and besought God “to give me more strength, less work, or a horse;” and then I hired a horse to ride to town on; and when I came there, I went to put him up at Mr. Jackson's livery-stables, near the chapel, in Margaret-street; but the ostler informed me they had not room to take him in: I asked if his master was in the yard; he said, Yes; I desired to see him; but the master told me he could not take the horse in; at the hearing of which I was going out of the yard, and he stepped

stepped after me, and asked if I was the person that preached at Margaret-street Chapel; I told him I was: he burst into tears, and told me he would send one of his own horses out, and take mine in; and informed me of his coming one night to hear me out of curiosity, because he had been informed that I had been a coal-heaver.—He then told me that God shewed him under the first discourse the insufficiency of his own wretched righteousness—the carnality and hypocrisy of his religion—the true state of his soul—and the necessity of the Spirit and grace of Christ Jesus the Lord to change his heart, if ever he was saved.—This was good news to me; and he blessed God for sending me there.—He also informed me, that some of my friends had been gathering money to buy me a horse, and that he gave something toward him. But directly after I found the horse was bought and paid for;—and one person gave me a guinea to buy a bridle, another gave me two whips, another gave me some things necessary for the stable, another trusted me for a saddle; and here was a full answer to my prayer.—So I mounted my horse, and rode home; and he turned out as good an animal as ever was rode.

As I was on my road home, I was meditating on the manifold blessings which I had received from God, both in a way of grace and providence; and how unworthy I was of them, and how unthankful I had been for them: and I said to my God, I had
more

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more work for my faith now than I had before; for the horse would cost half as much to keep him as my whole family; in answer to which this scripture came to my mind with power and comfort, *Dwell in the land and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed.* This was a *bank note* put into the hand of my faith; and when I got poor, then I pleaded it before God, and he answered it: so that I lived and cleared my way just as well when I had my horse to keep, as I did before; for I could not get any thing either to eat, drink, wear, or use, without begging it of God. And sometimes I found much murmuring in my heart against being held in with so tight a rein; but I was sure to suffer for that afterward, and found by daily experience that *I could not add one cubit to God's stature, no, not even in the least thing; therefore it was in vain for me to take thought for the rest.*

Having now had my horse for some time, and riding a great deal every week, I soon wore my breeches out, for they were not fit to ride in.—I hope the reader will excuse my mentioning the word breeches, which I should not have done, if this passage of scripture had not intruded itself into my mind, (just as I had resolved in my own thoughts to leave this providence of God out of the treatise) namely, in *Exod. xxviii. 42, 43. And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness, from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach. And they shall be upon Aaron and upon his sons, when they come into the tabernacle of the congregation,*

congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die. It shall be a statute for ever unto him, and his seed after him. By this passage of scripture, and three others, namely, *Ezek. xlii. 18. Lev. vi. 10. and Lev. xvi. 4.* I saw that it was no crime to mention *breeches*, nor the way in which God sent them to me; as Aaron and his sons were clothed entirely by Providence; and as God himself condescended to give orders what they should be made of, namely, linen; and how they should be cut, namely, to cover the loins.—And I believe the same God ordered mine, and so I trust it will appear in the following story:

The scripture tells us *to call no man master, for one is our master, even Christ.*—I therefore told my most bountiful and ever-adored Master, that I wanted a pair of *breeches*; but his most blessed Majesty seemed to take no notice of it for near a month, which was a trial to my faith, as they were got so very bad; and I evidently saw by scripture that God hated nastiness in a Christian, by that passage which commands the use of the *paddle* in *Deut. xxiii. 13, 14.*; and I knew God hated idleness also, because he commanded Adam and Eve *to dress the garden, and to keep it.* Therefore I desired earnestly to appear neat and decent in the pulpit, though Providence saw it needful to keep me poor,

I often made very free in my prayers with my invaluable Master for this favour, but he still kept me
so

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so amazingly poor, that I could not get them at any rate. At last I was determined to go to a friend of mine at Kingston, who is of that branch of business, to bespeak a pair, and to get him to trust me until my Master sent me money to pay him : I was that day going to London, and was fully determined to bespeak them as I rode through the town. However, when I passed the shop I forgot it : but when I came to London, I called on Mr. Croucher, shoemaker, in Shephard's Market, and he told me there was a parcel left there for me, but what it was, he knew not. I opened it, and there was a pair of *leather breeches*, with a note in them, the substance of which was, to the best of my remembrance, as follows :

“ Sir,

“ I have sent you a pair of breeches, and hope
“ they will fit. I beg your acceptance of them ;
“ and if they want any alteration, leave in a note
“ what the alteration is, and I will call in a few
“ days and alter them.

J. S.”

I tried them on, and they fitted as well as if I had been measured for them, which I was amazed at, as there was not a *leather breeches-maker* in London that had ever measured me. I wrote an answer to the note to this effect :

“ Sir,

“ I received your present, and thank you for it.
“ I was going to order a pair of leather breeches to
“ be

“ be made, because I did not know till now that my
 “ Master had bespoke them of you. They fit very
 “ well, which fully convinces me, that the same God
 “ that moved the heart to give, guided the hand to
 “ cut; because he perfectly knows my size, having
 “ clothed me in a miraculous manner for nigh five
 “ years: and when you are in trouble, Sir, I hope
 “ you will tell my Master of this; and tell him what
 “ you have done for me, and he will repay you with
 “ honour.”

This is as nigh as I am able to relate it; and I
 added,

“ I cannot make out *I. S.* unless I put *I.* for *Is-*
 “ *raelite indeed*, and *S.* for *Sincerity*, because you did
 “ not sound the trumpet before you, as the hypocrites
 “ do.”

About that time twelvemonth, I got another pair
 of breeches in the same extraordinary manner, with-
 out my ever being measured for them.—But per-
 haps my reader may blame me for this relation, and
 think that as the good man gave his alms entirely in
secret, it ought not to be published to the world. To
 which I answer, our blessed Saviour, when he was
 on earth, spake his parables openly; but when in
 private, he communicated to his disciples all the rich
 treasures of wisdom and knowledge that lay couched
 in them. Thus Christ gave his spiritual alms in *se-*
cret; yet he commanded them to proclaim that wis-
 dom upon the *house-tops*. It is true, he charged his
 I F patients,

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patients, when healed, not to tell any man what he had done; which was, to show that he sought not the applause of man, but the honour of God, while he remained a bond-servant under the law, and in a state of humiliation: yet, after his death, they were to proclaim the whole of it to all the world; and all that Christ healed by the disciples were allowed to proclaim it, and sometimes they were presented before the councils as witnesses of his power. And though our alms are to be in *secret*, and we are commanded to say we are *unprofitable servants*; yet the Redeemer, who graciously condescends to receive and accept the fruits of our faith, will proclaim them one day before all the offspring of Adam—I was an *hungered*, and ye gave me meat; I was *thirsty*, and ye gave me drink; I was a *stranger*, and ye took me in; *naked*, and ye clothed me; *sick and in prison*, and ye visited me: and they, being stript of all *Arminianism*, said, Lord, when saw we thee an *hungred*, &c. &c.?—Forasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these little ones, ye have done it unto me.

These things plainly shew us, that our alms ought to be given in *secret*, and that the giver ought to be silent about it; but the receiver ought not to be mute, but proclaim it to the honour of God, who opens the heart, and to the praise of his brother, who has done well through grace:—and thus Paul and John, in their epistles, commend many who abounded in the *grace of liberality*.

I was

I was one night going to Richmond to preach, and it was at a time when there was much snow on the ground, and also a very severe frost; and behold as I was on the road, I met a poor *cripple*, in a very deplorable condition. He solicited an alms of me, and I refused him, because I had but one shilling in all the world, and I did not chuse to part with that: however, I found myself greatly distressed because I did not give it to him, as he appeared in such a miserable condition:—I thought, perhaps, in such a severe night as that was, he might perish for want of the necessaries of life. When I came to Richmond, I told a friend of it, and said, I thought him to be in a dreadful situation, because I was so much distressed about refusing to relieve him; and declared that if I met him again, I would give it to him, if I never had another shilling of my own.—The next night, as I was going to preach in a village adjacent, I met the same poor object, and I had got the same shilling in my pocket, and no more. The poor creature passed me, but asked nothing of me; however, I turned back and gave him the shilling, and the poor man received it with great joy and thankfulness, and told me a deal of his sufferings, which fully convinced me he was in great want;—and this blessed passage of scripture came to my mind, *He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again*, Prov. xix. 17.—I went that night and delivered my discourse; and

when I had done, a woman took me aside into a room, and put three half-crown pieces into my hand, saying, "I was commanded to give you that."—I asked her, "By whom?"—She replied, "By a gentleman; but you are not to know his name."—Thus I received my shilling again, with a very considerable interest; and thus also the fulfilment of the *promise* took place.

One providence I had almost omitted, which was, that I was exceeding badly off for *beds* and *bedding*; and indeed for many months my little ones were forced to lie upon *bags of hay*; but after putting up many petitions, my most blessed Master sent me these things also.—There were some of my most intimate acquaintances who knew how I was tried in this respect, though I never made it known to any body who was capable of helping me out of my trouble. But one night (after I had done preaching at Richmond) a person invited me home to his house with him, and shewed me a large bundle tied up, telling me, that it was for me. I asked who the donor was: he replied, "You are not to know that." I carried it home, and it proved to be bedding, and the very things which I stood in so much need of.—Thus the blessed Saviour fulfils his gracious promise, which he made to his servants, when he said, *Whatever ye shall ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it, John xiv. 13, 14.*

Some

Some time after this, I took gospel courage, and asked my Master to give me a new *bed*; and I importuned his ever-blessed and most excellent Majesty until I got it. And I perceived that the Lord approved of a bold, though not of a presumptuous, *beggar*, agreeable to his word, *Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, &c.*; therefore I boldly asked him the favour, and persevered in it, until I was one day informed by a friend, that *four* or *five* pious people were coming on such a day from London, to visit me. Then my faith told me I should soon have the bed. Accordingly they came, and we had some comfortable conversation together: toward evening they departed, and at their departure they gave me four guineas.—Oh! what Christian, in his right mind, would murmur and complain at his poverty, when, with a watchful eye, he sees such liberal supplies poured forth from the inexhaustible stores of Providence!

I was determined to keep this money for a *bed*, and therefore went to a good man in London, and bespoke *one*; he very soon sent *it* down to me, with a *rug* also, and a pair of very good *blankets*.;—and soon after I called to pay him for it, when he told me to pay his clerk, which I did, and got a receipt; but afterward the gentleman went a little way with me, and at his departure gave me all my money back again. How sweet are temporal, as well as spiritual blessings, when they are seen to come from a cove-

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nant God and Father, in answer to the simple *prayer of faith* ! Surely, *he that will observe these things, even he shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord*. The promises of God pleaded in humble prayer, and promised mercies received in answer thereto, always come with a divine impression, and *sweetened with love to us* ; for every such mercy is *sanctified by the word of God and prayer* :—but to the unbelieving and the prayerless there is nothing clean, though there be ever so much stock in hand.

I have sometimes been proud and vain enough to think, that my *habitation* and temporal *mercies*, which my God has sent me, attended with the blessed influences of comforting grace, have been as much consecrated to me, as any *cathedral church, or church-yard, in Europe*, which had even the consecration of a bishop to make it sacred : for I have often thought that it is the presence of God, and that *only*, that consecrates an house of prayer ; and that it is God's *blessing*, the *habitation* of the *just*, with his *presence*, that makes their *tents* HOLY ; and on whatever spot God is pleased to visit a soul with his powerful and free salvation, and to manifest himself a sin-pardoning God, through Christ, by his MOST HOLY SPIRIT, that such spots of ground, and such only, can, with propriety, be called HOLY GROUND :—and I believe it would puzzle even the learned themselves, to shew any other consecration than this that is good for any thing,

As

As for the consecration of church-yards, which some are so fond of laying their bodies in, I have no desire after them; as I believe all the corpses that lie there were sown in weakness, sown in dishonour, and sown in corruption; and living consecration doth not dwell *with dead men's bones, and all uncleanness*, but with the living, who are *consecrated kings, priests, and Nazarites*.

I hope my reader will excuse my running so far out of my way after consecration; but, indeed, I am not the first man that *mock consecration* has led astray: however, I should not have meddled with it, if it had not intruded itself into my thoughts; and therefore rather than displease my reader, I will resume my subject.

Another year having rolled over my head, I began to look about for my new livery; for I always took care to let my *most propitious MASTER* know when my year was out:—and, indeed, I wanted it bad enough; for riding on horseback soiled my cloaths much more than walking did. However, my Lord exercised my faith and patience for six weeks together about this livery; and I looked all manner of ways to see it appear, but every door seemed shut up; I could not see from what quarter it was to come.—(You know, reader, we are all very fond of running before God; but he takes his own pace.)—At length I was informed by Mr. *Byrchmore*, that a gentleman in Wells-street wanted to see me:—I therefore called upon

him; and when I was admitted into the parlour, there sat the gentleman, and his spouse by him; and he *wept*, and begged I would not be angry at what he was going to *relate*, which was, that he had for some time desired to make me a *present of a suit of cloaths*, and he was afraid I should be offended at his offer, and not accept it.—(“ Ah !” says *Envy*, “ there “ need be no fear of that; for *Methodist parsons* are “ all for what they can get.”—It is true:—and we are commanded to *covet earnestly the best things*; and so we do; for we expect a double reward of the Lord—one in this world, and the other in the next; and this is no more than what our Master has promised to give us; for *we are to receive an hundred fold in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting!*)—I told the good man that I had been for some time expecting a suit of cloaths, but I saw not how I was to procure them. They both wept for joy upon my accepting them, and I wept for joy that they gave them so freely.—They said, they had many fears that I should be offended at their offer, and not receive them:—and I had been much exercised in my mind, fearing that my Master would not give them to me, as he had usually done: however, our minds were eased of our fears on both sides, and I was *clothed*; and it was the best suit of cloaths I ever had.—This is the fifth livery that my poor staggering faith put on my *back*, and every suit came from a different quarter.—The name of the good man that gave me
this

this suit is R——I.—I mention this, to shew that I cannot keep such secrets, because he strictly charged me not to let it be known. However, I have imitated the disciples of old in this; for it is said of them, that *the more Christ charged them to keep silence, the more they spread it abroad*; and indeed it must be so, or else the Lord would be deprived of the honour that is due to his holy name.—And as for the Saviour's charge, it plainly shewed, that he sought not the applause of men; yet it is the indispensable duty of every Christian to applaud the Saviour.—But if my reader will give me leave, I will shew my opinion of the Saviour's charge:—I believe one great reason why he charged them to keep his miracles concealed was, because those that were healed were, in general, very ignorant of his deity; yea, and even his disciples themselves, at that time, had but very gross, low, and shallow thoughts and views of his being the omnipotent and self-existent JEHOVAH. We often hear them calling him by the name of his manhood only; as when he rebuked the waves of the sea, they said, *What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?* And as two of them were going to Emmaus, and the Saviour drew near to them, and asked them the reason of their being sad, they said, *Art thou a stranger to Jerusalem, and knowest not these things?* And when he said, *What things?* they said, *Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a MAN mighty in words and deeds before God and all the people, &c. mentioning his*
manhood

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manhood only. And Martha also, at her brother's grave, had her gross thoughts lifted up no higher, when she said, *But even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee*:—the Saviour's answer was, *I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, (mark, IN ME) though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth, shall never die.—Dost thou believe this?*—“Thou believest that I am
 “prevalent with God in prayer, and that which I
 “ask of God, God will give it me. If thy faith,
 “Martha, centers in me, as one who is only preva-
 “lent with God in prayer, thou makest me no more
 “than Noah, Daniel and Job were: but dost thou
 “believe that *I am* the resurrection itself, and that
 “eternal life which lives in all the just, and which all
 “the just live IN?—Dost thou believe this?”

It is to be observed, that if any came to our Lord Jesus Christ with their carnal thoughts hovering altogether about his manhood, they generally met with a sharp reproof:—*Good master, what good thing shall I do?* said one:—*Why callest thou me good,* said the Saviour, *there is none good but one, that is God.* But if any approached the Lord as the object of faith and worship, they were sure to meet with his approbation.—Thus the tenth leper that was healed, *worshipped him* as the real object of faith; and his faith was approved, and peace added to it, *Go thy way,* said Christ, *thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.* And when Thomas cried out, *My Lord and my God!* “Ay,
 “Thomas,”

“ Thomas,” said the Saviour, “ ay .”—and again, “ You call me Lord and Master, and ye say well, for so I am.” Thus it appears, that our dear Lord often lifted their thoughts up to his godhead, when (like the birds upon Abraham’s sacrifice) they were settling upon his flesh and blood only; as the Arians in our days do, just like a shoal of eagles, always working upon the carcase, but cannot see the ALTAR that sanctified the sacrifice. Job’s eagle did not do so; *she mounted up when God commanded her, and made her nest on high. She dwelt and abode upon the Rock, not upon the sand; yea, she sat upon the CRAG of the Rock, even the arm of Omnipotence, that strong place.—From thence she sought the prey; that is, she fed upon Christ crucified by faith.—And her eyes beheld afar off; that is, in hope she looked at Christ glorified, now in the highest heavens; and there she saw the King in his beauty, in that land which is very far off, Isa. xxxiii. 17.—Her young ones also suck up blood; they live by faith on the atonement;—and where the slain are, there is she,* agreeable to the Saviour’s comment on the words, *Matt. xxiv. 28. Job xxxix. 27—30.*

But to return to my subject.—I had an invitation to go and preach at Horsham, in Suffex, one Monday evening. On the preceding Lord’s day I preached at Woking, in Surry, and had to ride from thence to Horsham. On the Monday I set out, to go across the country, and it happened to be in the winter season; and just as I got out of Guildford town, it began

gan to rain, and continued to rain in a violent manner all the time that I was on the road.—It so happened, that I had but one shilling in my pocket, which would only procure a feed of corn for my horse, and pay the turnpikes.—My furtout coat was only a very thin Bath, which was of very little use, as it was almost worn out; therefore I was much exposed to this violent storm of rain, having so bad a covering:—and, indeed, I think I never had been so wet before—I was obliged to strip, and have even my shirt washed, before I could preach.—I then secretly wished for a large *horseman's coat*, as I was forced to ride in all weathers: but as I had been begging so many things of my most indulgent Master, I thought, *by my continual coming, I should weary him*; not considering, that God commands us *to open our mouths wide, that he may fill them*; which, I believe, means, that our *desires* should be as *extensive* at a throne of grace, as God's *pregnant promises*, which he made to us in the dear SON of Love.

My mock-modesty would not allow me to ask God for a *great coat*, though I earnestly desired it, and murmured at the providence of God, because I was kept so poor that I could not purchase one. However, it was not in the power of my unbelief, nor yet in the power of my sinful murmuring, to close the bountiful hand of my Maker; for when I came to London, on the Wednesday following, and had delivered my discourse at Margaret-street Chapel in the evening, a
 person

person came to me, just as I came out of the chapel, and said, "I want to speak to you;" which was to inform me, that he intended, with the assistance of some more friends, to make me a present of an *horseman's coat*; and therefore he desired me to be measured for it, which I accordingly was, and that gentleman, and a few others, honourably paid for it.

Thus my *mock-modersty* and *unbelief* could not make the promise of God of none effect; and God forbid it ever should.—After I had received this gift from God, this scripture came sweet to my soul, *I know both how to be abused, and I know how to be abound; every where, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need*, Phil. iv. 12. And indeed I found by all these trials, that I was instructed also; for I learned one blessed doctrine by this providence, which I never saw clearly before, namely, the power of internal or mental prayer ascending so prevalent with God, under the influences of the Spirit, even when the understanding and the lips were both unfruitful; and the application of these texts of scripture led me into the sweet views of it, *Lord, thou hast heard the DESIRE of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear*, Psalm x. 17.—And again, *Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the DESIRE of thine heart. Commit thy ways unto the Lord: trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass*, Psal. xxxvii. 4, 5.—These scriptures led me to consider, and apply with comfort to my

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my own soul, the many precious promises which God has made in Christ Jesus to the spiritual anxiety of a renewed soul at the throne of grace, even when the *sound of the voice*, the *sound of the organ*, and that *confused gabbling of monkish mimicry*, called *chanting of prayers*, are left quite out of the promise; as will appear in the following passages, which I beseech my reader to consider—*The desire of the righteous shall be granted*, Prov. x. 24.—And again, *For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness*, Psal. cvii. 9.—And again, *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him*.—And again, *For he looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner;—(mark that) to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death*, Psal. cii. 19, 20.

Thus you observe, reader, that the promise is made a *spiritual hunger*—a *spiritual thirst*—an *holy longing*—a *deep heart-felt sigh*—an *earnest desire*—and a *groaning* from a burdened mind; all these are petitions put up by the blessed Spirit of supplication alone, (without the use of the lips) *who maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*. These were the prayers which our blessed Saviour put up at Lazarus's grave, when he groaned in spirit, and was troubled—Jesus therefore again groaned in spirit, John xi. 33, 38.—And again, *And Jesus looking up to heaven, he sighed,*

fighed, and saith unto him, Ephratha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain, Mark vii. 34, 35. Thus it appears, that agonies, tears, groans, and sighs, were chiefly the all-prevailing petitions put up by our dear Redeemer, when in a state of humiliation.

It is not an eloquent voice, nor elegant speech, nor lofty compliments, nor swelling words; not much speaking, nor long prayers, nor yet the numberless repetitions of "we beseech thee to hear us, good Lord," that shall ever prevail with God: it is not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom;—the foolish virgins were too late with Lord, Lord. God will accept of no sacrifice but that which comes in the hallowed flame of his own kindling, and perfumed with the sweet-smelling favour of that blessed, ever, available, and ever-living sacrifice of his dear Son. That man that calls himself a Christian, or a follower of the Saviour, and is an utter stranger to all mental prayer, has never reached the ear of God yet; for God is a spirit, and will put up with nothing short of spiritual prayer.

Let this encourage thee, reader, if thou art one who cannot find words to express thyself at a throne of grace.—If thou canst pour out thy soul before the Lord, and shew him thy trouble, and leave thy burdens there with him—these are precious prayers; and if thou comest from thy knees with thy mind eased, thy
faith

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faith *strengthened*, thy hope *encouraged*, thy bowels *refreshed*, and with *confidence* that God hath heard thy *prayer*, for his dear Son's sake, oh! they are sweet answers from God.—Be thankful and pray on.

During the space of *three* years, I secretly wished in my soul, that God would favour me with a *chapel* of my own, being so sick of the *errors* that were perpetually broached by some one or other in Margaret-street Chapel, where I then preached. But though I so much *desired* this, yet I could not ask God for such a favour, thinking it was not to be brought about by one so very mean, low, and poor as myself. —God, however, sent a person unknown to me, to look at the spot, and afterward he took me to look at it; but I trembled at the very thought of such an immense undertaking. Then God stirred up a wise man to offer to build a chapel, and to manage the whole work without fee or reward:—he drew the pattern in his imagination while he was hearing me preach a sermon:—I then took the ground, this person executed the plan, and the chapel sprung up like a mushroom.—As soon as it was finished, this precious scripture came sweet to my soul, *He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him*, Psal. cxlv. 19.—Thus the chapel appeared as an answer to the earnest desire which God had kindled in my heart, and which he intended to fulfil in his own good time, to the honour of his own great name, the good of many souls, and to the encouragement of my poor, weak, tottering

tottering faith. It is owned in the Church of England service, that "all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works proceed from God;" and I believe they do.

Another kind providence which I experienced while I resided at Thames-Ditton was, that my *sur-tout coat* was got very thin and bad, and the weather at that time was very cold.—It happened that I was invited to preach at a little place, not far from London; and as I went thither, I felt the cold weather very severely: but as soon as I had delivered my discourse, I desired a young man to fetch my old *great coat*; in order to put it on before I went out of the warm *meeting-house*; and when the man came back, he brought me a *new great coat*. I told him that was not mine, for mine was an old thing: he told me it was mine; but I insisted upon it that it was not; but he insisted on it that it was; so I put it on, and it fitted me very well; and soon after, I put my hand in the pocket, and there was a *letter*, which shewed me that my blessed Lord and Master had sent it me, to wrap my poor worthless carcase in during that very severe winter season.—Oh! the tender care of our most gracious Lord and Master! Solomon says, *The favour of a king is as a cloud of the latter rain*:—I think he must mean the cloud of God's divine favour, which blotted out our transgressions as a cloud, and appears as a *cloud by day*, to screen us from the *storm of wrath*; and if my reader watches the bountiful hand of God,

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he will see this blessed *cloud* daily *discharging itself* in the genial showers of grace and providence ; as it is written, *And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing ; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season ; there shall be showers of blessings,* Ezek. xxxiv. 26.

They have a common saying in the *Wild of Kent*, when the daughter of an old farmer is married.— If it be enquired what *portion* the old man gave her, and the answer is, that “ he gave not much money ; yet,” say they, “ the old people are always sending them something — there is always something to send from a farm-house.”—Then the answer generally is, “ Aye, her’s is a hand-basket portion, and that is generally the best ; for there is no end to that.” Even so our everlasting Father gives to his poor children an *hand-basket portion*, a *basket* being that which we generally fetch our daily provisions in ; and God sometimes puts his blessing even in the basket, and then it seldom comes home empty ; as it is written, *Blessed shall be thy basket,* Deut. xxviii. 5. Our blessed Saviour eyed this promise on the mount : when he was going to feed *five thousand men, beside women and children, with five loaves and two small fishes*, it is said, *he looked up to heaven, and blessed and brake, &c.* ; and that blessing was enough, for *they were all filled*, and there were *twelve baskets full of fragments*.—Thus the *blessing* appeared in the *basket*, and that made the Saviour so fond of the *fragments*,

fragments, as to give this strict charge to his disciples, *Let nothing be lost.*—Thus, too, the proverb of the *hand-basket portion* appears true; and our blessed Saviour himself lived on *it* while he dwelt below; yea, the whole *Levitical tribe* lived on the *hand-basket portion*; and even the *shew-bread*, that was set *hot before God on the golden table*, was brought in a *basket*.—Thus hath God himself highly honoured the basket.

Truly I am of opinion, that the *hand-basket portion* is the best, both for *soul* and *body*, because it keeps us to prayer, it exercises our faith, it engages our watchfulness, and it excites us to gratitude. It does not appear that the *prodigal son* added much to his *fortune*, when he desired *the portion of goods that fell to him*; that is, he desired to be an *Arminian*, to have an *independent stock* of his own, and to be left to *improve* it by himself; and therefore he did not chuse to live nigh his father, lest he should interfere; but he went *into a far country*, that his father might see how he flourished in the world, when once he became *independent*. But *self-will*, *free agency*, *self-sufficiency* and *independency of God*, seldom gain much by *trading*; for we all know, that this *independent merchant* would have been starved, and damned too, if free grace had not undertook to feed him, and to save him. *Poor soul!* I warrant ye he flourished away at first, but he soon brought himself down upon a level with the swine; Free Agency, with her boasted dignity, made but a poor figure while she sat ban-

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queting at the *hog-trough*: and one would imagine, that if any thing would exclude boasting, this certainly would;—he could not boast of the entertainment, because it was nothing but *hucks*; nor could he boast much of the company, being only swine.—I believe the prodigal left all boasting behind, when he forsook the *pigs'-pound*. If my reader, therefore, is one who has got a stock in hand, *he may murmur against his portion*, if he be an unbeliever, and view it as a snare, or trap. Indeed it is a trap to many who set their heart upon it: this was the case with Israel—*their table became a trap, a stumbling-block, and a recompence unto them*; yea, *that which should have been for their welfare, became a trap*. But if my reader be a believer in a dear Redeemer, his stock is a blessing, while he is thankful to God for it, and does not place his affections on it: and if he is liberal of the stock God has given him, his liberality daily sanctifies it—*Give alms*, says the Saviour, *of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you*. Paul declares, that *the lively faith of a believing husband would sanctify an unbelieving wife, and make her a temporal blessing*.—The first sheaf under the law being given to God, sanctified the harvest; therefore I refer my reader, if he be one that has a stock in hand, to God's promised blessing, *Blessed shall be thy store*, Deut. xxviii. 5.

I once preached on the Lord's day at Woking, in Surry; and the week before that time, I and my family had been sorely tried for want of the common necessities

necessaries of life.—I was very fond of feeding my little ones, when I had it to feed them with, because I knew how much I had suffered, when young, through my parents' poverty :—this made it the more affecting to me, when I had nothing to give them.—My eldest daughter, *Ruth*, used to make use of a deal of broken *gibberish*, which I very well understood ; and that week the little ones had lived chiefly on bread, which I was much grieved at, as the appetite of young growing children is so craving after food. When I used to shut the *cupboard* door, and gave them nothing but *bread*, the eldest would look me in the face with much earnestness and solemnity, and ask me this important question, “ Is the *boo* all *boppee*, “ daddy ? ” which simple dialect she had a great deal of ; but this speech by interpretation signified, “ Is “ the butter *all* gone, father ? ” The poor little creature used to lay her head on one shoulder, look me full in the face, and drop her emphasis with such a weight upon the particle *ALL*, and draw it out with such a long tone, that she would make it end with the final *e*. Then she would use some of her logic, and reason the point with me, and ask me many strange questions, which I partly understood, as they amounted chiefly to the *enquiry*, when the butter would come, or whether there was any ground to hope for any ; and at that time I could give her no promise, as a ground for her hope, for all doors of hope were shut.

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At this time, we had a very severe frost and some snow on the ground, and but very little fuel; and as I was coming from Woking on the Monday morning, before I came to Cobham (having left Woking without taking any breakfast, as it was so very early) I was exceeding hungry and weary, and had but little to expect when I arrived at home, for I knew I had nothing but bread, and perhaps not that. When I came on the common, which is called *Fair Mile*, lying between *Cobham* and *Esher*, I fretted and wept bitterly at my hard fate, and yet trembled for fear of offending God by my complaining, as he had given me so full a persuasion of my eternal salvation, through Christ.—I often feared that he would hear my murmuring as he did the murmuring of Israel in the wilderness, when he answered them by terrible things, namely, *He gave them meat for their lust, but sent leanness into their souls.* And I thought if God should take away the happy enjoyment of his love from me, and lay me in a stock of temporal things instead thereof, I should have cause, like Job, to curse the day wherein the change was made; therefore I often prayed against that, and the blessed Spirit taught it me, and greatly helped my infirmities in those prayers.

But when I got about half over the above-mentioned common, it came suddenly in my mind to go out of the horse-road, into a little narrow track, which leads over the hill, between the *hand-post* and the

Bath-

Bath-house. I could gain but very little ground by this, nor do I remember that ever I had gone that way before; but I had not gone far on the path, before I found what this impression meant; for there was to be a battle fought between a *stote*, or *weazel*, and a large *rabbit*. The *stote*, or *weazel*, was to fight the battle, and to win the field, and I was to take the prey:—so I took up my rabbit, and carried him home, and glad that I had got it; it proved as fine a one as I ever saw, being quite *in season*, and that in every sense of the word, for we had nothing but bread in the house.

I should have mentioned this circumstance before, as it happened before I received the horse; but I cannot recollect all the circumstances, so as to range them in their proper place, my memory being naturally bad. I lived in this manner for seven or eight years together, and every day afforded some providence or trial.

My dame about this time was pregnant, and not far from her in-lying. She gave me a large catalogue of the necessaries that she should want against that time: I told her I had no money, nor was there any signs of my having any, and we could not get them without it. She went on in suspense this way, till she expected her time every day, and began at last to fret amazingly. I told her I thought that God tried her thus, because she was remiss in the blessed privilege of private prayer:—I also said to

her, that *God would be enquired of by us, that he might do these things for us*; and that if she did not pray for them, she was not like to have them. I believe this drove *her grace* to prayer; for, soon after this, there was a parcel sent from *Lambeth*, another from *Kingston*, another from *Richmond*, and a *few things* from some *neighbours* nearer home. I now asked *my lady biskop* if she thought she had got enough: she replied, “Yes, and more than enough—God had exceeded all her desires;—for she had feared that she should not get money to buy the stuff, to make up her little things; and that if she did get it, it would be so late, that she should not have time to make them; but God (said she) has sent them ready made:”—so Mary was very well pleased, and richly supplied.—Thus the universal Provider of all in heaven and earth, richly provided for the little stranger, even before he made his appearance on the stage of time. This providence rather appeared strange to me, as I had not ever let the case be known to any person, to the best of my knowledge; but God, who knew our straits, and heard and answered our prayers, did, by some means or other, inform some friends of our wants, and then touched their hearts with a spirit of sympathy and liberality; and I think for three or four births successively, the Almighty raised up one *Dorcas* here and another there, to provide for *her grace* against her *in-lying*.—Thus the ever-blessed God, who inflicted the judgment

ment of sorrow on women, in bringing forth children, as a punishment to their sex for being first in the *transgression*, did richly supply the wants of my dame against the hour in which his own decreed and predicted sorrow came on:—thus, too, the just sentence denounced in his just displeasure against the female sex, for their disobedience, only made more work for *sovereign mercy*, in supplying their wants, supporting them in their troubles, and bringing them through their sorrows.—Oh! how sweetly does a covenant of grace (confirmed by the Saviour's death) engage the sweet mercy and love of the Almighty! for whatever Justice, Holiness, or Truth, threatened the sinner with, it all fell to Christ's account; and whatsoever Justice, Holiness, or Truth, demanded of us, they brought in all their bills to Sovereign Mercy in the bowels of Christ Jesus; so that one perfection of the Deity became, through rich grace, a debtor to the other. If Justice will not abate a mite of the sinner's debt, Everlasting Love is determined to have a *gaol-delivery*, if the creditor himself appears in the character of the debtor, and then of the surety; and thus the whole bill of Justice falls on the score of Love, and a *gaol-delivery* is proclaimed to us; and though we contracted the whole debt, yet we go free, with only acknowledging ourselves debtors to Grace.—A sweet way of paying debts, truly! my very soul has often rejoiced and wept to see how *Loving-kindness and Tender-mercy* have been

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been put to their shifts to pay off the unlimited demands of vindictive Justice—and that such poor debtors and rebels as we are, who contracted so great a debt as that of eternal suffering, and which we never could pay, though we suffered to all eternity—that we should have a surety provided to pay both the preceptive and penal sum for us—and for God's Eternal Spirit to be sent to proclaim a full and clear discharge from the whole, and a receipt in full of all demands, written by the finger of the creditor, sealed by the *Holy Ghost*, and witnessed by Father, Son, and Spirit, confirmed by the blood of the surety, supported by all the laws of God, and for ever settled in heaven—and for Justice to stand bound with a thousand ties, never to come upon the debtor to Grace again!—Oh! the sweet mystery that makes our souls tremble, and yet stand so fast!—that makes us rejoice with joy unspeakable, and yet weep till our bowels yearn!

My dame having recovered her lying-in, came with another complaint, which was, that she had cut up almost all her old gowns for the children, and that she stood in great need of a new one; I answered, that I could not buy her one, for I had no money, and there was no likelihood of getting any.—As I often heard this complaint, I at last told her, that she must beg it of God, if she would have it, as I did my cloaths; for God had promised us these things, and his word informed me, that *the gold and silver,*

silver, the corn, the wine, the oil, the wool and the flax, were his own; and that if she had faith in him, she would have her request granted, in answer to her prayer. — I had now a great desire to see whether she would have any success at a *throne of grace*, or not: it passed on, however, for a long time before the gown appeared, but at length it came; for it happened one night after I had done preaching at Margaret-street Chapel, that there came a person who delivered a parcel into my hands, which I received, and when I opened it, there was a note, with these words in it, — “This is a present for Mrs. Huntington,” and along with it twelve yards of *cotton*, to make a gown; but who the person was that gave it, I never knew from that hour to this. — (I believe that some of my friends knew the person.) — This parcel I carried home to Ditton, where it gave great satisfaction; and Mary was not a little delighted to find that God had granted the request of her lips.

I now endeavoured, as much as possible, to get my dame to live by faith, and often encouraged her to prayer, by telling her, that she had a right to expect her support from God as well as myself, seeing that the Almighty had taken me from my daily labour, to work in his vineyard; and I supported my argument from this consideration, that the whole *Levitical tribe* lived of old on the offerings of the Lord, both *women and children*, as well as those men who waited at the altar.

Soon

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Soon after this, Providence sent me three guineas, and I was determined with that to furnish my dame with some other apparel:—I bought her another gown; and it so happened, that a friend informed me she intended to give her another, which she accordingly did.—At this my dame seemed highly pleased;—her unbelief was confounded, her murmuring stopt, and all was well. However, I took care not to break through the bounds of Paul's assertion, *But he that is married, careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife; but I would have you (saith Paul) without carefulness.—He that is unmarried, careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord,* 1 Cor. vii. 31, 32.—We must endeavour to please our Master, if we cannot always please our *mistress*.

After this, the bountiful hand of my Lord seemed to be closed again, and that for a long time, until I got five guineas in debt, and began to want even provisions. Now I began to fret, and unbelief crept in apace: but just as the spirit of murmuring and complaint began to operate, there came a letter to me from a gentleman at *Gainsborough*, in *Lincolnshire*. I opened it, and found the following contents in it:

“Dear Friend,
“I HAVE sent you a *hamper* by one of my *ships*,
“which will be at London by such a time, if God
“permit; and I have ordered it to be left at *Hun-*
“*gerford*.”

“ *gerford-stairs* for you.—The first present is for your
 “ *wife*, which is *two ends*—the other is for your *chil-*
 “ *dren*, being a *cow*, and her *milk-maid* attending her,
 “ a *cow* being very useful where there is a family—
 “ the last article, according to my judgment, is a
 “ very useful thing for *you*, and for every *gospel-mi-*
 “ *nister*. Tender my respects to your *wife* and *little*
 “ *ones*, and accept the same from

“ Your humble servant,

“ J. D.”

Here is the riddle, and I had seven days to find it out in. My dame asked me if my present was a bible; I told her, no, I believed not: I also told her that Paul called a gospel-minister an *ox*—*Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? or saith he it altogether for our sakes? for our sakes no doubt this is written.*—

“ Thus (said I) God compares a preacher to an
 “ *ox*:—*treading out the corn*, is unfolding and explain-
 “ ing God’s *word*;—*muzzling the ox*, is not giving
 “ him *food* to eat for his *labour*, as Paul explains it,
 “ *Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach*
 “ *the gospel, should live of the gospel,*” 1 Cor. ix. 14.—
 And I further added, that “ the same apostle who
 “ compares the preacher to an *ox*, tells us, in his
 “ epistle to the church at Colosse, to *let our speech be*
 “ *always with grace, seasoned with salt, that we may*
 “ *know how we ought to answer every man,*” Col. iv. 6.

Therefore

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Therefore I conjectured my present was a bullock's *tongue*, well *salted*; and as for her present, which the letter expressed to be *two ends*, I thought it was a *fitch of bacon*, cut in two pieces; but as for the *cow*, I could not conjecture what that should be.—But when the hamper came, we all got round it, to see what was the substance of the *riddle* in the carcass of the lion; and when it was opened, I found that my present was a bullock's *tongue dried*; my dame's present was two large pieces of *bacon*; and the childrens' present was a *cheese*, with the print of a *cow*, and a *milk-maid* milking her, on it.—That was the present, and that was the explanation of the riddle.

About this time, I went once a fortnight to preach at a certain place in Middlesex, which lay about ten miles from Ditton, where I lived, and they gave me three shillings a time for preaching to them. There was a single gentleman, who was a member of the church, and a man of great property, allowed to be worth *twenty or thirty thousand pounds*. This gentleman once saw me pass by his *door*, as I had been that way to visit a sick woman.—He called me into his house, and expressed much love to my Master, Jesus, and a great satisfaction in hearing my discourses on the doctrines of grace; and desired me the next time I came, to deliver a discourse from two verses in Deuteronomy, *But the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and vallies, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the*

eyes of the Lord thy God are upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year, Deut. xi. 11, 12. So I promised to offer my thoughts on the passage when I came again to preach; and at my departure he gave me the right hand of fellowship, blessed me in the name of the Lord, and put his hand into his pocket, and very generously made me a present of a whole shilling. I took it, and thanked him kindly; for I thought it was the first fruits of liberality that ever grew upon that tree, and perhaps the last; and I mention it now to the honour of his compassionate bowels. I found afterwards that he had made many enquiries after me, and had been informed that I was a poor man, had a large family, and that I walked ten miles out, and ten miles back again, and was from home all night when I preached at that place, for which I received only three shillings. These things reaching his ears, conveyed that sympathetic touch to his feelings, and finally dragged that WHOLE SHILLING out of his pericardium.

I have sometimes been led to think that such liberal souls cleave more to English proverbs, than to divine precepts; at least that good man sticks very close to one saying, which is, "Take care of the main chance." but if ever the one thing needful should take possession of his heart, that would turn the main chance out, as we see in the conversion of Zaccheus.—I have often thought, too, that as Hagar was the bond-mother of all legal professors, so Ananias

nias and *Sapphira* were the parents of all covetous professors; and I believe that *Simon Magus* is the figurative fire of every person who is labouring hard to purchase the grace of God, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, by their own supposed merit.

Having been one night to preach at Richmond, I was invited home by my friends Mr. and Mrs. *Chapman*, at *Petersham*, near *Richmond*, to sleep; and in the morning Mrs. *Chapman* smiled, and told me she had an article by her which she intended to make me a present of, which was twelve yards of *Stuff damask*, to make me a *morning gown*. I laughed heartily at it, and said, I thought a *coal-heaver* would cut a strange figure in a *morning-gown*—I should appear like a beggar in dignity; but that was better than dignity in ruins. However, they saw that God had began to lift up my head, and they were determined that their pastor should make a more respectable figure; they therefore insisted on my having it; but I objected to a gown, because it has such a cottish appearance on a labourer in the vineyard, and makes us look not unlike a lying-in woman; wherefore I turned it into a *banyan*, or *coat*; and when I had got it made up, I hid it for two or three months before I could reconcile myself to appear in it.

I had now received a letter from a friend in the country, who was in great distress, and stood much in need of a little relief; but at that time I myself was four or five pounds in debt, and had been a long
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time in expectation that my God would send it. I found that God now began much to try my patience, and that I ought to importune, and watch, and wait upon the Lord, and to keep my eye fixed on him, as a servant's eye is on the hand of his master, until I obtained an answer. However, I never waited upon his blessed Majesty in vain, for it was sure to come at length. After I had put up many petitions, and had been kept long in suspense, I one night called on Mr. and Mrs. Smith, who lived in *Chandler-street*, Oxford-road, who were great friends to me; and after I had supped with them, they generously made me a present of *three guineas*.—I humbly beg their pardon for mentioning their names, and exposing their secret alms; but as *I prayed to my father which seeth in secret, and he in mercy rewarded me openly*, I therefore must *proclaim it upon the house-top*, to encourage the weak faith of others, that they may make God their guardian and their bank.

I now took encouragement to hope that my gracious Master would add to this blessing a sufficiency for the purpose of discharging my debt, and relieving my friend, which, in answer to prayer, he was graciously pleased to do.—The next morning a person knocked at my door, and desired to see me. When he came into my study, I looked at him, but he was a gentleman that I had never seen before. He told me that he had once heard me preach at Dr. Gifford's meeting-house, and once or twice in Margaret-

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street chapel, and that he had heard me greatly to his satisfaction : and the reason of his coming to see me now was, that he had been exercised the last night with a dream—that he dreamed the word of God came to him, saying, *If thy brother be waxen poor, thou shalt open thy hand to thy poor brother, &c.*—He asked me if there was such a portion of scripture ; I answered, the words were these ; *If there be among you a poor man, one of the brethren, within any of thy gates, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother : but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release is at hand ; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest him : because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land : wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in the land, Deut. xv. 7—11.* He told me, many of these words came to him in his sleep ; and in the morning, when he awoke, he felt the power of them. In wondering who this poor brother could be, he informed me it was impressed on his mind that I was
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the poor brother, about whom he had dreamed; and asked me concerning my circumstances. I then told him of the trial I was in; and as he was fully satisfied it was of God, he wondered much at it. At his departure he gave me a new pair of *doe-skin gloves*, two new *white handkerchiefs*, very good, and a *guinea*. He then blessed me, and left me; and I do not remember ever seeing him before that time, nor but once since.

The next day, a friend told me a person had left a guinea with him for me;—and when I came to Mr. Byrchmore's, in Margaret-street, a lady came to his door in a coach, and enquired after me, and when I came to their door, she put her hand out, and gave me a guinea, and then ordered the coachman to drive away; she having done all the business God sent her to do.—Thus our most bountiful Benefactor answered these my poor petitions also, after he had been pleased for a time to exercise my faith and patience, in order to encourage me to a stronger confidence in his grace and providence; and I now make it known to the honour of his veracity, and to the encouragement of the poor of his flock, who are obliged to live, both spiritually and temporally, *by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*. And as God has been pleased to reveal himself as a God that will hear and answer prayer, and has appeared so to me, one of the worst and least of all his creatures, I chose to *subscribe with my hands*, Isa. xliv. 5. *set to my seal*,

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and proclaim to all that *fear his name, that God is true,* John iii. 33.

Oh ! these words have often been sweet to my soul, and as applicable to my case as possible ; *And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know ; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live,* Deut. viii. 2, 3.—

When these precious answers to prayer appeared, they always came attended with humbling grace, and were sweetened to my soul with a blessed sense of unmerited love ; and though at certain times, when unbelief has prevailed, I have found it hard work to keep from murmuring ; especially, when I have seen the basest of mortals rolling in wealth and pleasure, and spending it to support the shattered interest of the devil ; while I could appeal to God that I loved him, and sought his glory, and the good of his chosen, and yet suffered for the want of common necessities, while I laboured beyond my strength in his righteous cause and interest. But these two scriptures generally silenced my murmuring ;—*The wicked have their portion in this life, whose belly God fills with his hid treasure* :—and the other was, that *the righteous*
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are God's witnesses against the wicked.—These words, likewise, would sometimes occur to my mind, *He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed.*—And again, *To one it is given to gather together, and heap up, but never an heart given to do good therewith; this is a sore travail.*—And that in Job, *Though the wicked prepare raiment as the sand, yet the righteous shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.*—Better is gospel contentment with poverty, than the sacrifices of many wicked; and I have often found the most comfort in my soul, when my outward matters have appeared to wear the most gloomy aspect;—internal consolations have more than once counterbalanced all my external afflictions. These daily crosses attending me in circumstances, I found were made very useful to those whom God hath called by me, as the means to establish them in the faith of Christ, *who is the Saviour of the body as well as the soul*, and in whom the invaluable promise is *yea and amen to every soul* that is interested in his finished *salvation*. God hath given us all things in Christ, whether life or death—yea, we have the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come; which promise *even includes all things pertaining to life and godliness*. Happy is that soul that credits God's promise—places his confidence in him for the fulfilment of it—makes use of the means God has appointed—daily pleads his promise in the humble prayer of faith—patiently waits his time—daily watches his hand—lives in a holy expectation of a

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daily supply of spiritual and temporal mercies from the God of his salvation, and who is humbly thankful to God for every favour that flows through the atoning blood and prevalent intercession of a dear Redeemer!—I say, let not such envy the *crowned head*, or *sceptered hand*; for if there be any virtue, or if there be any praise, if there be any serenity of mind, if any peace of conscience, if any honour to God, if any fruit to the glory of the Most High, it is to be found in such a soul; and he, with the greatest propriety, may be said to *think on these things*.

At another time, when Providence had been exercising my faith and patience, till the cupboard was quite empty, in answer to a simple prayer, he sent one of the largest hams that I ever saw.—Indeed, I saw clearly that I had nothing to do but to pray, to study, and preach; for God took care for me, and my family also, agreeable to his own promise, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you*: and, indeed, I have often thought that the reason why our dear Lord and Master gave no inheritance to the *Levitical tribe*, who performed the *sanctuary service*, was, that they might learn to live by faith, and likewise to exercise and try the liberality of the *worshipping tribes*. And this appears to be the reason why the apostles were sent out to preach *without purse or scrip*.—Certainly, God could have sent them out as rich as the *sanhedrim*, if he had thought proper;—but no; he left the blind priests

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to live on the offerings and tithes of the blind led, as their *portion*; and it is to be feared that was the only portion that some of them ever had from God. But the poor apostles were to go out with only a portion of grace in their hearts; and where they sowed those *spiritual things*, God opened the hearts of the converts to *bring forth temporal things* to them; and it often appeared, that as soon as the grace of God had taken the government of a young convert's heart, his temporal riches appeared *at the apostles' feet*.—Thus the gospel defrayed the expences of the dispensers of it; and this I believe was intended to try the sincerity of the *grace* of those who were enabled to believe the gospel; as Paul put some of his followers upon a like trial, and made liberality one of the *touchstones*—*See that you come not behind in this grace also*. Yea, and even our dear Lord and Master lived on the alms of his followers; and as soon as he was born, the *eastern sages* opened their *treasures*, and *presented unto him gold, frankincense, and myrrh*; and even until his crucifixion, he lived on the liberality of his poor followers, who are said to *minister to him of their substance*. It is true, Satan offered him *all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them*, upon certain conditions; but he refused; chusing to suffer hunger, rather than *turn stones into bread* to please an accusing devil.

At another time, also, Providence was pleased to try me, till I run five guineas in debt; and after I had prayed and waited some time for it, a gentleman

belonging to the *Stamp-office* (a very faithful friend to me for many years together, during my state of extreme poverty) called upon me, and generously made me a present of five guineas, which payed off that debt.—Oh! the goodness of God to those that fear his name, and hope in his mercy!—He even sent *a raven to feed the prophet Elijah*, when he dwelt by the *brook Cherith*; and an angel, too, from heaven was sent to *bake him a cake on the fire, and bring him a cruse of water, when he slept under the juniper-tree*, being weary, in his road to *Horeb*—*Arise and eat*, (said the celestial guest) *for the journey is too great for thee*, 1 Kings xix. 7.

I now began to get exceeding weary of living at *Thames-Ditton*, as I did not see that God had any thing more for me to do there. His word had appeared a *savour of life unto life to some few*, and a *savour of death unto death to many*, as they were so indefatigable in opposing it. In short, I secretly longed to leave it, but was determined not to do it, until I saw the Lord himself open the door; for *when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes before them*. I was fully persuaded that I should end my ministry in London, and had long told a friend in town of it. Another reason for my wanting to quit Ditton was, the *bad state of health* that I felt myself in, which rendered me incapable of such long journies, and so much labour. But I have generally found God to kindle a desire in my heart after *that* which he intended to bring to pass.

pass.—Thus when the time came for *Israel* to leave *Egypt*, the spirit of supplication was sent to make intercession in many of their hearts, after their deliverance from bondage; and God told Moses, he had heard the groanings of his people *Israel*, by reason of their task-masters; and I am come down, said God, to deliver them.—And so it will appear even in this matter when I have related it.

It came to pass that I had been to Wooking to preach: I came home about twelve o'clock at night, and before I could shift myself, and take care of my horse, it was between one and two. At that time we had an infant that was very ill.—I told my dame that I would lie alone that night, as the child was so very restless, that I was apprehensive I should get no rest myself, being very weary then; and having another journey to go the next day, I imagined I should not be able to perform it, if I were disturbed in my rest. Accordingly I went into another bed, and fell into a very sound sleep; and I dreamed, and behold in my dream I thought that I heard the Lord call to me with a very shrill, distinct voice, saying, *Son of man! son of man! prophesy, son of man, prophesy!* I answered, *Lord, what shall I prophesy?* The voice came again, saying, *Prophesy upon the thick boughs.* I immediately awoke, and felt a comfortable power on my heart, and thought the voice seemed fresh in my ears;—I knew not what it meant, nor did I remember ever seeing any such words as *thick boughs* in the bible.

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However, I got up immediately, and traced my bible, to see if I could find these words, *the thick boughs*, out; thinking that if I could find these words in the bible, I should conclude the dream to be from God. I soon found the words, and perceived the *thick boughs* to be men, *Ezek. xxxi. 3. chap. xvii. 23.*; but what the command could mean, I could not at that time tell, because I was employed in *prophecyng on the boughs* almost every day. I went into my dame's room, and told her of it; but observed, at the same time, that I could not think what it meant, though I certainly should know hereafter.—The next day I came to London, and told it to Mr. Byrchmore, the tallow-chandler, in Margaret-street; adding, that I knew there was a mystery in it, and that, as it was from God, it would shortly be revealed to me.

However, it passed on for some days intirely hid from me, what the meaning could be. But I knew *the vision would speak in time; and though it tarried some days, yet I waited for it*, *Hab. ii. 3.* I told also another friend, Mr. Butler, of it, who is now one of my pew-openers; but he did not seem to like it, as he wished me to stay at Ditton.

It so happened shortly after this, that I was taken ill, and was obliged to be shut up in my room for two or three days, during which time I was ruminating in my own mind the conduct of the people at Ditton; how long I had preached amongst them, and how unwearied they had been in persecuting the
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gospel of Christ; and that though God had cut off so many of them in their rebellion, yet they were still blind both to his mercies and to his judgments. As I had appeared in that place in the mean capacity of a *coal-heaver*, they would not allow themselves to think that God had sent such an one as me to preach to them.—I then thought on my infirm state of body, and of the many weakneses which I laboured under, which were brought on me by living abstemiously, and by hard labour, and that I was *bringing my years to an end like a tale that is told*.

In short, I secretly wished that God would remove me from that place.—It came to pass, while I was musing in this manner, that it was suddenly impressed on my mind to leave Thames-Ditton, and go and take a house in London; and that I should leave these little places in the country, and preach in the great metropolis, where hearers were more numerous; and that this was the meaning of the words that came to me in the vision, “*Prophecy, son of man, prophecy on the thick boughs.*” Under this impulse, I found myself very happy, and was thankful to God for my intended removal, as it seemed so plain to be of him. I then told the Lord that they had hated me because of my poverty and mean appearance, and these words came to my mind with power, *A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country and in his father’s house.* And it was farther suggested to my mind, that God had permitted them lately to persecute me
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more than usual, that they might wholly drive the gospel from them; and I much question if ever God sends his word there again.—I then sent for a friend of mine, one Mr. Felton, and informed him of it; and he said he thought me justifiable in leaving the place, and mentioned the before-cited passage, *viz.* *Christ testified that a prophet had no honour in his own country.*—I then took my horse, and rode to London, and informed some friends of it; every one of whom approved of my resolution.—I accordingly took a house, and soon after ordered two carts from London to bring my household furniture from Ditton.

As there remained five years of the term unexpired of the lease of the house I was going to leave, I thought in my own mind that I was taking a strange step in leaving a house that I could not let. I now thought it would lie on my hands—that the coppers and other fixtures which I bought must be left behind, as they would be useless where I was going—that the money which I had laid out in planting my garden was all sunk—this money, too, I now wanted for various uses. But my MOST BLESSED BANKER provided against this burden also; for it came to pass, just as I had loaded my goods, that a person came and asked me if I had let my house; I told him, no; upon which he replied, “I will take it of you, and buy your fixtures, and your trees, and the garden crop also.” In short, my landlord accepted of him for his tenant, the lease was assigned
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over to him, the fixtures and plants appraised, the money paid down, the keys delivered up, and all was settled to my wish, and beyond all expectation.

Thus far my vision appeared true.—The next thing I had to observe was, whether the boughs were *thick*, or not; because the vision was, *Son of man, prophesy among the thick boughs*.—I believe that part of the vision will be fulfilled, though all the world oppose it; and having opened a larger chapel seems still to confirm it more and more; and I have not a single doubt but the boughs will be as thick in it as the words expressed it, and that I shall prophecy among them.

When I first began to open my mouth for the Lord, the master for whom I carried coals was rather displeased at it, which I do not wonder at, as he was an *Arminian* of the *Arminians*, or a *pharisee* of the *pharisees*. I told him, however, that I should prophecy before thousands, before I died; and soon after the doors began to be opened, to receive my message.—When this appeared, and I had left the slavish employment of coal-carrying, others objected to such a fellow as me taking upon me the office of a minister; the answer was, “Let him alone; I once heard him say that he should prophecy before thousands before he died; let us see (says he) whether this prophecy comes to pass, or not.” He had, as I suppose, that passage in view, mentioned by Moses, *And if thou say in thine heart, How shall I know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaks*

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in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

However, they very shortly saw it come to pass, and that in a very extraordinary manner; for God opened four doors for me presently, and in a very little time brought me to preach out of doors.

At my first beginning to speak in public, many professors and possessors of grace opposed me, as well as the world; some from a principle of *jealousy*, others from a principle of *love*, *fearing that I should run before I was sent*; but they knew not the impulse that I was under. Of their oppositions to me, however, I often complained to God in prayer, telling him that I expected some degree of support and encouragement from his own children; but instead of that, I had nothing but opposition, and a weakening of my hands;—indeed some kept themselves at a distance from, have contradicted, me at times, and behaved quite insolent to me. In answer to these petitions, the Lord applied these words to my heart, and gave me a strong faith in them; *A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men*, Prov. xviii. 16. At length I was led to see that I must be weaned from the arm of the church, as well as from the arm of the world; and these words confirmed me in it, *Trust ye not in a friend, put ye no confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom,*

son, Mic. vii. 5.—The best of them is as a brier, the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge, ver. 4.

God took an effectual method to convince these last of his having called me to the work of the ministry ; for it so happened, that a certain professor had engaged a minister to come from London, and preach out of doors, at *Moulsey*, on the Lord's-day morning. This was published at our meetings ; and as I had never heard a sermon out of doors, I was determined to go. As he was to preach so early as six o'clock in the morning, I could hear him without encroaching upon those hours in which our little church met.—About three o'clock on the Lord's day morning I arose ; but as soon as I was out of my bed, (pleasing myself at the thoughts of hearing a sermon, and having an opportunity of trying my doctrine by the standard of a London preacher) there came a voice to me with power, which I both *heard* and felt, saying, “ You must preach out of doors to-day, and “ you must preach from this text, *Go therefore into “ the highways, and as many as ye find bid to the marriage,*” Matt. xxii. 9. I was much amazed at this sudden impulse ; yet I thought it was from God.—If, however, I ever mentioned any thing of this sort to some people, they generally called it a delusion ; but notwithstanding this, God generally shewed me afterwards, that they themselves had but little, if any, experimental knowledge of God.

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I shall now relate every circumstance of this extraordinary affair, and leave the unprejudiced to judge whether it was from God, or whether it was from Satan.—I sat down to look out the text, but could not find it : I then got up, and went to a friend about two miles off, who I knew had a little concordance. I called him up, and asked him to look me out such a text, which he accordingly did :—I turned it down, put my bible into my pocket, and went with him to hear the gentleman that was to come from London. When we came to the place, I saw there were a great many people gathered together, and the table was set for the preacher to stand on, but behold he never came ; so we waited till seven o'clock, and then every one of those who had opposed me begged me to get up and preach.—I could not but admire the divine conduct in this matter, as those who opposed me (some, because my language was bad—others, because they thought they had more understanding in the word than I had—others, because I was but a babe in grace, and they of longer standing) were the very people who invited me to preach. But here the cause of God was at stake, *and there was now no answer in the mouth of any of those who had opposed me* ; therefore they forced that person up, whom they before had tried, by their conduct, to pull down ; so I complied with their request, and went trembling up to my station.—As soon, however, as my heart began to get warm in the cause, all my fear left me.—I now
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delivered my message from the text God gave me, and he was with me in the work.—Then it was that some were ready to cry *Hosanna!* however, they had so battered me about, that neither their applause nor their disapprobation had any weight with me.—I have often thought of those words spoken by Eliphaz to Job, *Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?* Job v. 1.—Turn! turn to none but God; for if the most upright among men is but as a briar, and sharper than a thorn hedge, we have no reason, like Abraham's ram, to hang our horns in a bush, lest we fall a sacrifice.—Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, (says the Almighty) for wherein is he to be accounted of?—But there was a young widow who came to hear me preach that first sermon; and Providence opened her heart, so that she attended to the things spoken by the coal-beaver, and heard the gospel constantly afterward; but at last she was seized with most violent convictions, and was obliged to leave her place, and go home to *Esher workhouse*, where a doctor was sent for, to lay a *blister* on her head, which is not a very proper remedy to draw out the bane of guilt, where the sting of death has so fatally envenomed the conscience. At times they found her quite delirious, and then she called earnestly on the Lord Jesus Christ;—they then shook her, abused her for praying, and declared her mad; and when they found she had been among the *Methodists*, it was easily accounted for; therefore they

handled her accordingly. But when she got a little better, she sent for me to come and pray by her, which I accordingly did; and then she told me of their cruel usage to her. I then spoke to my wife about it, and we borrowed a *bed*, and got her home to our house:—my dame nursed her body, and I tried to nurse her soul, and soon after she got well in body, and happy in mind. Then she went and took a lodging, and worked for her bread, and continued to sit under my ministry for about six years. At last she fell into a *deep decline*, and soon took to her *bed*; and for two or three days before her death, she was violently tempted and distressed, even beyond measure. After this, she came forth from that *dark cloud*, and shined like the rising sun, and continued in these blessed rays of glory, till she closed her eyes in death, and launched forth into eternity in all the triumph of a gospel conqueror; and there is the end of that mystery.—The woman's name was *Simmions*. One of the men who forced me up to deliver that sermon was Mr. *Butler*, one of the *pew-openers* now at Providence Chapel.

Before I proceed, I will give my reader an account of another *providence*, which is this; a person came from Richmond to hear me preach at Ditton, and when he went back, he informed several persons that he approved of my ministry. They accordingly sent me an invitation to come over to *Richmond*, and help them, but I refused to go; however, they sent for me

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a second time, but I again refused it; at last they came to the *shoe-maker* that I then worked for, and he compelled me to go; but not to preach in the chapel, but in a house that was licensed. I went very reluctantly indeed; but when I came there, I found the Lord's presence sweetly with me; so, at their request, I went again on the Tuesday following.—Soon after, I found that I had done wrong in going there, though God had been powerfully with me; for it came to pass that tidings had been carried to London, and had reached the ears of two professing gentlemen, who were the managers of Richmond chapel. This caused them to come down to Richmond, to make inquiry whether any coal-heaver had ever thus presumed to do—to preach the gospel to those poor souls who had asked me. Upon enquiry the thing was found to be certain, and the tidings (which had been carried) were true; so the man and woman, at whose house I had preached, received a very sharp reprimand, and were threatened also with the penal sum of fifty pounds, for letting me preach in their house, because I was not at that time properly licensed.—Soon after this, a day was appointed for preaching and prayer at *Richmond Chapel*, and a dinner ordered at an inn for all the congregation that chose to dine there, and pay for it. Two ministers were appointed to preach on that occasion—*after the commandments of men, and not after Christ*; and an old gentleman took his text out of the *Acts*, and preached from these

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words, *And when Barnabas saw the grace of God, he was glad, &c.*—There was nothing in all the text against my preaching at Richmond, for I was as glad to see the grace of God as ever *Barnabas* was; but he turned his text into a *nose of wax*, in order to make it fit my face; and told the people they might readily suppose that *Barnabas* had his *credentials*, or *credential letters*, from the *elders* that were at *Jerusalem*; and so out of that supposition, he spun a *cat-o'-nine-tails* to lash me with—a man whom he had never seen. But where I was to go for credentials, I knew not; if he had required credentials from God, I could have shewed them to him. I think if I had been there, I should have asked him whether that sermon *had been from heaven, or of men*; however, at the long-run it appeared to be of men, because it came to nought.—These things wonderfully distressed and puzzled me; first, because the people sent three times after me, before I would go at all; and secondly, the presence and power of God seemed so visible, to my comfort, and the comfort of those that heard me; and yet this puzzled me, that these great men, who were called Christians, should oppose me so much. The people, however, determined to hear me; and I generally found God with me in the work, notwithstanding of which I always went reluctantly. In this matter, I set off to an arm of flesh for counsel; though the presence of God was counsel sufficient, if I had been wise enough to have rested on it. However, I
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was not as yet weaned from an arm of flesh ; therefore I went to *ask council at Abel, and so hoped to end the matter.* The counsel I received from the good man I went to (after I had related the whole circumstance to him) was, that I should stay away from preaching there, as it gave offence to some great men ; so I took this advice, and came home much eased in my mind, and glad that I could so get my neck out of the yoke. But when the Tuesday following arrived, being the day on which I was appointed to preach at Richmond, I found the broken reed on which my foolish soul had rested, began to give way, and I sunk again into all my distresses. Then it came on my mind, how that God had comforted me in the work ; and if the supporting arm and comforting presence of God, are not a sufficient testimony of God's approbation, we are not likely to get one from man.—I still doubted, however, whether I should not offend God by trusting to this human counsel ; for I thought if God had called me to preach at Richmond, and I should stay away when the little flock expected me, I should much offend the righteous Majesty of heaven, and be disobedient to the heavenly call ; and if it was wrong for me to go, I could appeal to God I had no desire for it. As to selfish views, I had none ; for one night they collected a parcel of money for me, knowing how poor I was, and how much I had suffered in the work ; and they thrust the money into my pocket by force, when I refused it ; but even

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after this, I threw it upon the floor, and insisted on no more than eighteen-pence for my trouble, in going from Ditton to Richmond to preach. It now came suddenly into my mind, to go and lay this matter before my blessed Lord and Master, who never disappointed nor deceived me in his counsel. I therefore left my cobbling, and went into my chamber, and prayed in the following manner ; “ Oh God, my Saviour and dear Redeemer, thou knowest I have
 “ no desire to go and preach at Richmond ; but the
 “ people came after me several times.—If thou hast
 “ any thing to do there by my means, incline my
 “ heart to go, let who will oppose it ; but if not,
 “ let not thy servant presume, as my heart has no
 “ desire to go there : and as I would not offend thy
 “ Majesty, either by going or staying, I beseech thee
 “ to convince me by the first scripture that occurs to
 “ my mind.—Oh Lord, reveal thy mind and will to
 “ me in this particular, and let me not offend thee,
 “ as I am willing to obey thy voice, if thou art
 “ pleased to make it known to me. Amen.”

As soon as I had got from my knees, these words came with power to my mind, *Be not weary in well-doing, for in due time ye shall reap, if ye faint not.* This gave me some comfort ; but when I went and sat down to my cobbling again, I began to reason thus ;
 “ *Be not weary in well-doing*—true : if it is displeasing
 “ to God for me to go to Richmond, then it would
 “ be *well-doing* to stay at home ; and if it be dis-
 “ pleasing

“pleasing to God for me to stay at home, then it
 “would be *well-doing* for me to go and preach at
 “Richmond:” so, like Gideon, I tried the fleece
 once more, and said to myself, that if God should
 give me a text, and a sermon on it, I should think
 it was from him, and that I had a just right to carry
 God’s message. I had no sooner made this a crite-
 rion, than these words came with power and under-
 standing, *And his brightness was as the light; he had
 horns coming out of his hand, and there was the hiding of
 his power*, Hab. iii. 3, 4. The 2d and 3d verses of
 the 33d chapter of Deuteronomy, I found was a key
 to this text. I therefore got up and went, and was
 determined to deliver that message there at that time
 only, and then to inform them that I would come
 there no more. But before I began to preach, I
 earnestly begged of God to comfort the people
 greatly, if he approved of my preaching to them;
 but if not, that he would send them away dejected,
 and shut me up, till I had little or nothing to say to
 them. In that night God blessed us wonderfully;
 and when I had done, I hesitated whether I should
 inform them of my intention of not coming again,
 as it so offended the managers. But these words came
 to my mind, *And he said unto them, The kings of the
 Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise
 authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall
 not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as*

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the younger ; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve, Luke xxii. 25, 26. Having received these words, I published myself to preach there again the next Tuesday ; and was fully convinced, that no *proprietor* of a building had any warrant from God to keep a gospel message from the *ears* and *hearts* of God's *children*, unless they can prove their messenger either *erroneous* or *wicked*, which they could not do, for they had neither ever seen or heard me.

After I had preached there a few times, it came to pass one evening, when I had finished my sermon, that a person came to me, to inform me that a woman (who was lately taken very ill, and was apparently near death) desired to see me. I accordingly went ; and when I came to her bed-side, I asked her if she had sent for me ; she replied, Yes. I asked her what she sent for me to do ; she said, to pray by her. I asked her what I was to pray for—that she might be raised up again ? she replied, “ No ; pray “ God to give me resignation to his will, and that “ he may not depart from me.” I asked her if she was sure the Lord was with her ; she said, Yes. I asked how she came by the knowledge of God's comfortable presence ; she told me she was a *native* of *Scotland*, and had heard the gospel from her youth, but she had not long known the *power* of it.—She said, she had often heard people in *Scotland* speak of their *comforts*, and *peace*, but she used to envy them
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for it, and at other times she thought they talked *nonsense*; but she still found a secret want of something, which she had long sought; and she told me she had never found that power, until I preached the sermon from a text in Habbakuk—*be had horns coming out of his hands, and there was the hiding of his power*:—"under that discourse (said she) the Spirit of
 "power came to me. My husband is a stone-mason,
 "and is gone to Ireland, to be the foreman of a
 "very large building there, and I am in time to go
 "after him, if God spares my life; but as my good
 "man has left me for a time, the Almighty is come
 "in his room." She now gave me a very sweet account of the operations of the Holy Ghost, and of the precious liberty which he proclaimed by the revelation and application of Christ crucified to her understanding, mind, and conscience. These tidings made my bowels yearn, as I could call to remembrance the soul-travail I had been exercised with on that day that the text was brought to my mind, and the blessed mystery that was opened to me in it; as also God's goodness in accompanying it with such power to her soul, and now to lay her on a *sick bed*, that she might send for me, to inform me that I had not preached nor travelled in vain.—Oh! the conversion of such souls are *greater riches* to me, than *all the treasures of Egypt*!—God in mercy soon after raised her up again, and she attended my ministry for about two years, and appeared a most amiable Christian. She
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always sat with her *head down*, and heard with all the attention imaginable ; and when she had got her portion, like Hannah, she would set off, without either looking or speaking to any body, as if she suspected every one that spoke to her to be a robber of her conscience. Indeed she was no *bastard*—she was my *own daughter*—she loved a *private religion*, that lay between *Christ crucified* and her *own conscience*, and I believe she kept her day-book very strictly.—Her name is Stuart.

She has now been at *Barron's Court*, in Ireland, about four years, a place where there is no gospel preached ; yet she corresponds with her pious friends at Richmond, still stands fast in the faith of Christ, and is shortly expected in England.

May God land them safe on the coast of our Israel, and at last on the shore of *that land which is very far off*. The conversion of this woman seemed to me such a testimony from God, that it confirmed me more in my call to preach at Richmond, than the testimony of all the divines in Britain would have done ; for *if we receive the witness of man, the witness of God is greater*. I hope never to despise the former, but chuse to stick close by the latter. This conversion appeared still more conspicuous, as her head was well stocked with gospel notions ; and I have often found those whose judgments were furnished with evangelical creeds, to be the forwardest to laugh at

at those, who enforced and insisted on the Spirit's work on the soul.

I shall now return to my subject, which was relative to my leaving Ditton, and coming to settle in London.

After having seen so much of the vision fulfilled, I now began to watch and see if I could discern this part of the words verified, which was the *thick boughs*. I knew *thick boughs* in Ezekiel's prophecy meant *sinners*, and the *boughs* of the *palm-tree* in the *Song of Solomon* meant *saints*; therefore, if I could see my ministry well attended, either with sinners or saints, the whole vision would appear evidently to be from God.

After I had been some time in London, I found our chapel in Margaret-street was open to every *erroneous preacher*.—This stirred up the hearts of my hearers to look out for another place for me, and very soon a larger chapel was proposed to be built. This still appeared to pave the way more and more for the fulfilment of the words brought to my mind, *prophecy on the thick boughs*.—The chapel was soon erected, and the good hand of our God was with us in the work, to our comfort.—But when it was opened, I saw the strong opposition it would meet with from every quarter.—This at first rather surprised me; but soon after, these words came on my mind, *prophecy on the thick boughs*.—I was enabled to rest on these words, and gathered much comfort to my

my soul from the consideration of its being opposed ; for I have ever observed, that when a work has appeared to be of God, it has generally met with the greatest opposition ; and when a cause flourishes in the face of many opposers, it appears still plainer to be God's work ;—the fewer human props there are to support the ark, the clearer God's hand is seen in it ; for *then God appears to work, and none can let it*, though they try at it : In this way God endears himself to the instrument he employs, weans that instrument from the creature, and secures all the glory to himself.—I have often thought that if Martin Luther, John Bunyan, or George Whitefield, had been alive in my days, they would rather have invited me than shut me out of their pulpits.—I believe I shall still prophesy on the *thick boughs* ; and according to my faith, *so it will be unto me*.—I have found my very soul at times melted down with gratitude at the goodness of God, ^{to} ~~in~~ so unworthy a creature as myself, when I have heard that several good people in London have asked great men, employed under God, to let me preach in their pulpits, as *Margaret-street Chapel* was too small for me ; but this favour could not be granted : similar to the case of poor *fore-eyed Leah*, who said, “ the Lord saw that I was *despised*,” therefore he gave me a large chapel to myself ; and I have now reason to conclude with her, that God *hath endowed me with a good dowry of spiritual children ; and these spotted sheep shall be for mine hire, when they shall appear before the Lord ;*

Lord; so shall the righteousness which I have preached answer for me.

I will now inform my reader of the kind providence of my God at the time of building the chapel, which I named PROVIDENCE CHAPEL; and also mention a few freewill-offerings which the people offered.

They first offered about *eleven pounds*, and laid it on the foundation at the beginning of the *building*.—Another good gentleman, whom I had little acquaintance with, and of whom I bought a carriage of *timber*, sent it me in, with a bill and receipt in full, as a present to the *Chapel of Providence*.—Another good man came to me with *tears* in his eyes, and blessed me, and desired to paint my pulpit, desk, &c. &c. as a present to the chapel.—Another person gave half a dozen of chairs for the vestry; and my friends Mr. and Mrs. Lyon furnished me with a tea-chest, *well stored*, and a *set of china*.—My good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, furnished me with a very handsome *bed, bedstead*, and all its *furniture and necessaries*, that I might not be under the necessity of walking home in the cold winter nights.—Another person, too, a daughter of mine in the faith, gave me a *looking-glass* for my *chapel study*.—Another friend gave me my *pulpit-cushion*, and a *book-case* for my *study*.—Another gave me a *book-case* for the *vestry*.—And my good friend Mr. E—— seemed to level all his displeasure at the
devil;

devil; for he was in hopes I should be enabled, thro' the gracious arm of the Lord, *to cut Rahab in pieces*; therefore he furnished me with a *sword of the spirit*—a *new bible*, with *Morocco binding*, and *silver clasps*. Perhaps, too, he had his eye fixed on the *rams' horns* and *silver trumpets*, which sounded the destruction of *Jericho*; which some say typified two sorts of ministers, namely, the *illiterate* and the *learned*; the *illiterate* were represented by the *rams' horns*, and the *learned* by the *silver trumpets*;—so, according to this, our blessed Lord, *who spake as never man spake*, and all his apostles, are jumbled in among the *rams' horns*. But I think as a ram's horn has a very *rough, unpleasing sound*, it rather typified the *legal ministry* under the *law*, where so many rams were offered; and the *silver trumpets* having a more *pleasing sound*, held forth the *evangelical ministry* under the dispensation of the *Spirit*; which exceeds the old *œconomy* in glory, as much as the sound of a *silver trumpet* does that of a *ram's horn*. The Revelation of St. John holds forth every sound from the death of Christ to the general judgment, to be by seven trumpets, *not horns*.—I think we may speak thus without offering any violence to the scriptures, and without attempting to nurse the pride of scholars.

A certain gentleman some time ago preached from *Pharaoh's vision* of the *seven fat* and *seven lean kine*.—The *lean kine* he made out to be *poor, mean, illiterate people*; and as he had a great many rich, dressy people

ple under him, he made out the *fat kine and well favoured*, to hold forth the rich, honourable, and learned of the earth. I read that the *lean kine* ate up the *fat* ones; and God says, it is the *rich that grind the face of the poor, and eat up his people as they would eat bread*; but I never read in all the Bible that the poor ate up the rich; for I think every poor man in England will hold with me in this particular, that the rich are agreed to keep that person *poor* who is *poor*.—But I shall return to my subject, and leave these men-pleasers to themselves.

I have yet to speak on the behalf of Providence, which was so conspicuous in furnishing me with money necessary for building the chapel.—I never went to one person to borrow money for the building, that ever denied me: God so opened their hearts, that I was amazed at his providence and their kindness towards me. And as for my friend Mr. *Lloyd*, in his *cheap way of going to work*, I believe he saved me *two or three hundred pounds* at least; which I should not have desired him to have done, had I been a man of *property*; for I think it is *the duty of every man*, who is able, to encourage *trade*, as *trade* is the *strength of a nation*; and it appears to me, that those who make it their business to shake that pillar, are sure to pull down the house about their own ears.

Now, reader, I must conclude.—I might have told thee of the providences of God which have appeared
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to me when I built the little chapels in the country ; but *time would fail me to tell thee* of all the goodness of God to his poor unworthy servant. I trust therefore my friends will pardon me for exposing their *liberality*, as I believe I have wrote it to the honour of their *Covenant-Father*, and with a desire to encourage the faith of our *poor brethren*.

May God attend it with his blessing, and follow my readers with the hand-basket portion, if they stand in need thereof.

Before I conclude, I must confess that I have a desire to write a little treatise upon my conversion to the faith of Christ ; and to this end there will be a subscription-book opened for it at the vestry of *Providence Chapel*, for any subscriber that chuses to put his name down. No money will be required till the book is delivered.—The price will be *One Shilling*.—I will put it in the press as soon as *three hundred* persons have *subscribed*.—There are thirty-one have subscribed at Richmond already.—A list of the subscribers' names will be printed in the book ; and I believe the title of the work will be, **THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TAKEN BY PRAYER.**

Until I visit thee, courteous reader, in the intended siege, I shall take my leave of thee ; *wishing thee every blessing both of the upper and of the nether springs ; while I remain,*

Thy willing servant at command,

9 N064 for Christ's sake,

W. H.

T H E E N D.